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TO

The Memory

OF

THEODOSIA,

The Daughter.

1857

"As to Burr, these things are admitted, and, indeed, cannot be denied, that he is a man of extreme and irregular ambition; that he is selfish to a degree which excludes all social affections; and that he is decidedly profligate."

Alexander Hamilton.

"A great man in little things, while he (Burr) is really small in great ones."

Thomas Jefferson.

"I witness your extraordinary fortitude with new wonder at every new misfortune. Often, after reflecting on this subject, you appear to me so superior, so elevated above all other men; I contemplate you with such a strange mixture of humility, admiration, reverence, love and pride, that very little superstition would be necessary to make me worship you as a superior being; such enthusiasm does your character excite in me. When I afterward revert to myself, how insignificant do my best qualities appear. My vanity would be greater, if I had not been placed so near you; and yet my pride is our relationship. I had rather not live than not be the daughter of such a man."

Theodosia Burr Alston, to her Father, Aaron Burr.

"Our friends and our enemies draw us—and, I often think, both pictures are like."

Thackeray.

PREFACE TO ENLARGED EDITION.

The publication of this work, in 1857, excited considerable controversy, which had the effect of calling forth additional information respecting its subject. Several interesting, pieces were published in periodicals, and several more were sent to me, which would have been of use in the composition of the book. Since that time my collection of Burr papers has continually increased, and some volumes have appeared which furnished new material, particularly the Blennerhassett Papers, edited by Mr. William H. Safford, of Cincinnati.

The new information, though great in quantity, and considerable in interest, is not such as to warrant a recasting of the entire work. It has, therefore, been added to the present edition in the form of appendices, and the work has been divided into two volumes. The opportunity has been embraced, also, to print some further passages from the correspondence of Col. Burr with his wife and daughter, a correspondence which exhibits him at his best.

The continued demand for the work, after having been before the public seven years, appears to show

that the people of the United States still feel some interest in the eventful and melancholy story of a man who was, at once, gifted and unwise, generous and unprincipled, amiable and deadly; and hence, it has been deemed worth while to issue this new and enlarged edition.

I suppose I ought to feel indebted to the many worthy and able gentlemen, who have animadverted upon the short-comings of this work, in the fear that the exhibition of a life that was so calamitous a failure might lure others to a similar ruin. I really supposed that the interests of virtue and civilization were duly cared for in the composition of the work. I thought that the story itself made it sufficiently manifest, that principle, not amiability, wisdom, not brilliancy, are the foundation of a life truly estimable and lastingly happy. Perhaps, however, this truth was not brought out as distinctly and impressively as it was felt, and it was proper, therefore, that the moral should be further elucidated by others.

But I am still of the opinion, that, in estimating the character of a man like Aaron Burr, the most instructive and warning consideration is, the great amount of good there may be in him. It is this which brings his example home to the great multitude who esteem themselves, and are esteemed very good people, but whose goodness is of the Burrian order—amiability, not fixed, intelligent principle—who are kept right by public opinion, and by a natural inclination to the easy

and popular virtues, but who will not stand the test of time, and of "that fatal touchstone," Opportunity.

Burr was gifted by nature with courage, generosity, and wit. The means of mental cultivation had been his, and he had an honorable profession. He was handsome, graceful, winning, and high-spirited, as well as indefatigably diligent and enterprising. He was everything, he had everything requisite for the attainment of permanent welfare, except that which has been styled the One Thing Needful—a CONSCIENCE enlightened and controlling.

The additional light thrown upon Burr's character and conduct in these volumes places this truth in a still clearer light, since most of the new information tends to show that his natural inclinations were towards virtue and honor. But, then, those natural inclinations never became fixed and correct principles of conduct. His conscience was not truly enlightened, nor was it controlling. He thought some things right which were profoundly wrong, and he did some things which were contrary even to his own imperfect views of right.

After doing full justice to his redeeming qualities, and after making proper allowances for his faults, we must still confess, that the popular judgment which expelled him from society, and which still refuses to pardon him, is upon the whole, not unjust. Men may forgive such a man: the community can not; for there

could be no community at all, if the majority of men were such as he. Every society properly expels a member that does not comply with its fundamental conditions: one of the most obvious of which is, that he should punctually pay his dues. This, Burr never did. He was always in debt, which, in an able man, is a certain sign of moral defect.

PREFACE.

The story of Aaron Burr's strange, eventful life, which must possess interest for the American people always, I attempt to tell, because no one else has told it.

Few men have been more written about than he ; but, generally, by partisans, opponents, or enemies. The life of Burr, by the late Mr. M. L. Davis, as it contains a great number of Colonel Burr's letters, and many documents respecting him and his doings in the world, has a value of its own, which publications like the present can not diminish. But the story of the man's life is not to be extracted from those volumes, for the simple reason that it is not contained in them. One may read Mr. Davis's work, and Burr's European Diary, and the Report of his Trial for Treason, making in all more than three thousand octavo pages, and still be utterly unable to decide what manner of man he was, and what, in the great crises of his life, he either did or meant to do. I can confidently appeal to any one who has gone through those six ponderous volumes, to confirm the assertion, that they leave Aaron Burr, at last, to the consideration of the reader, a baffling enigma !

To have condensed the information contained in those

thousands of pages into a single volume of convenient size and price, would have been itself a justifiable work. Much more than that has been done. To complete my information, I have resorted to the following additional sources :

First, the Literature of the period, and, particularly, the Memoirs and Letters of public characters, who were the rivals and associates of Burr. The correspondence of Jefferson, Hamilton, and John Adams has, of course, been of the most essential service.

Secondly, the newspapers of Burr's day. Great numbers of these are preserved, among other priceless treasures, in the library of the New York Historical Society, for access to which I am indebted to Mr. Moore, the obliging librarian of that institution.

Thirdly, Aaron Burr himself.

I never saw Aaron Burr, though in my early childhood I have played marbles before his door, and looked with curiosity upon the old-fashioned dull brass-knocker that bore his name ; having vaguely heard that some terrible old man, whom nobody would speak to, lived there all alone. The information that I have derived from Burr himself comes to me through his surviving friends and connections

So superior is spoken to written language, that a few hours' close conversation with people who were really intimate with Colonel Burr, threw just the needed light upon his character and conduct, which ransacked libraries had failed to shed. But for such conversations, I should never have understood the man nor his career. During the

last three years, I have been in the habit of conversing familiarly with many of those who associated with him during the last twenty or thirty years of his life, receiving at every interview some addition to my stock of anecdote and reminiscence. Burr had a remarkable memory, and, with persons whom he liked and trusted, was fond of conversing upon the events of his career; the whole story of which, at one time and another, he told them many times over. With all his faults, he was never given to self-vindication. He was one of those men who naturally make themselves out to be worse than they are, rather than better. He told the anecdotes of his life merely as anecdotes. The impression which they made upon those who heard them was such, that many of his stories they still relate in the very words he used, and with imitations of the look and gesture that accompanied each phrase. Burr's own view of the leading transactions of his life has thus been imparted to me.

Neither of my informants knew what any other of them had told me, or would tell me. The general concurrence, as well of the facts they gave, as of the opinions they entertained of the man, and their feelings toward him, was remarkable. The discordance and contradictions begin only when the inner circle of those who *know* is left, and the outer one of those who have *heard*, is entered. To Burr's surviving friends, then, I chiefly owe it that I have been able to extricate his story from the falsehoods in which it was embedded.

Others, whose acquaintance with him was slight and

accidental, and some who merely saw him in public situations, have also given me interesting information. The patient courtesy of many distinguished gentlemen to a stranger who could never make the slightest return of their kindness, greatly enhanced the obligation which they conferred.

Such are the sources from which the following narrative has been derived. All of them have been used — none followed

It may occur to some readers, that the good in Burr is too conspicuously displayed, or his faults too lightly touched, in this volume. To such I desire to say that, in my opinion, it is the *good* in a man who goes astray, that ought most to alarm and warn his fellow-men. To suppress the good qualities and deeds of a Burr is only less immoral than to suppress the faults of a Washington. In either case, the practical use of the Example is lost. Who can hope to imitate a perfect character ? Who fears that he shall ever resemble an unredeemed villain ?

Besides, Aaron Burr has had hard measure at the hands of his countrymen. By men far beneath him, even in moral respects, he has been most cruelly and basely belied. Let the truth of his marvelous history be told at last. If, here and there, my natural and just indignation at the unworthy treatment to which his name has been subjected, has biased me slightly in his favor, the error, I trust, will not be thought unpardonable. Aaron Burr was no angel ; he was no devil ; he was a man, and a — filibuster.

The period during which Burr was a public man is the

most interesting in the history of the United States, after the Revolution. It was then that Old Things in this country really passed away. Then arose the conquering Democratic Party. Then America became America. We are still only reaping what was sown in those twelve years, and shall for a very long time to come. Nothing considerable has occurred in American politics since the election of Jefferson and Burr in 1800 — though one or two considerable things have been gallantly attempted.

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CHAPTER I.

JONATHAN EDWARDS,

THE FATHER OF AARON BURR'S MOTHER.

His Residence in New York in 1722 — Sketch of his Career — His Wife and Daughters — Esther Edwards — The Edwards Stock — Influence of Jonathan Edwards.

In the autumn of 1722, when New York was a town of eight thousand inhabitants, and possessed some of the characteristics of a Dutch city, an English sea-port, a new settlement, a garrisoned town, and a vice-royal residence, there used to walk about its narrow, winding streets, among the crowd of Dutch traders, English merchants, Indians, officers and soldiers, a young man whose appearance was in marked contrast with that of the passers-by. His tall, slender, slightly stooping figure, was clad in homespun parson's gray. His face, very pale, and somewhat wasted, wore an aspect of singular refinement, and though but nineteen years of age, there was in his air and manner the dignity of the mature and cultivated man.

This was Jonathan Edwards, who had just come from studying divinity at Yale College, to preach to a small congregation of Presbyterians in the city. New York had an ill name at that time among the good people of New England. "The Dutch of New York and New Jersey," said one of them, "are little better than the savages of our American deserts." Jonathan Edwards was sent by a company of clergymen to this desperate place much in the spirit of those who, at the present day, send missionaries to Oregon or to the mining districts of California.

Every thing was adverse to the spread of his faith at that time in New York, and the young clergyman, after a residence of only a few months, went home to resume his studies. Dearly

loved and highly prized by some members of his little congregation in New York he certainly was; but there is no reason to suppose that the preaching of the greatest of American clergymen attracted the slightest attention from the unintellectual citizens of the place. Yet a happier, a more exultant youth, never trod the shores of this island than Jonathan Edwards. He had grasped the tenets of his sect not with the languid assent with which an inherited creed is frequently received, but with that eager, enthusiastic love which accompanies original conceptions. To him they were the most real of all realities. His manner was very calm and gentle. He spoke little, and kept apart from the busy life of the city. But the light of perfect benevolence and rapt-devotion rested upon his noble, thought-laden countenance, and a profound enthusiasm animated his heart.

Of his life in New York, he writes in after years a brief account, which still exists to reveal to a canting age a soul *devoted* to the object of its love. How touching is this extract:—"If I heard the least hint of any thing that happened in any part of the world that appeared, in some respect or other, to have a favorable aspect on the interests of Christ's kingdom, my soul eagerly catched at it; and it would much animate and refresh me. *I used to be eager to read public news-letters, mainly for that end; to see if I could not find some news, favorable to the interest of religion in the world.* I very frequently used to retire into a solitary place, on the banks of Hudson's river, at some distance from the city, for contemplation on divine things and secret converse with God; and had many sweet hours there. Sometimes Mr. Smith and I walked there together, to converse on the things of God: and our conversation used to turn much on the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world, and the glorious things that God would accomplish for his church in the latter days. I had then, and at other times, the greatest delight in the holy Scriptures, of any book whatsoever. Oftentimes in reading it, every word seemed to touch my heart. I felt a harmony between something in my heart and those sweet and powerful words. I seemed often to see so much light exhibited by

every sentence, and such a refreshing food communicated, that I could not get along in reading; often dwelling long on one sentence, to see the wonders contained in it; and yet almost every sentence seemed to be full of wonders."

Through the obsolete phraseology of this passage, one easily discerns a fine disinterestedness of character which, unless the human race should become wholly debased, can never become obsolete.

The industry of one of his descendants has given the world a biography of Jonathan Edwards, which possesses historical interest.* Of the religion called "evangelical," he was perhaps, the most perfect exemplification that ever existed. The child was father of the man. We see him, as a boy of ten, building a booth in a swamp near his father's house, to which he and two of his companions used to go regularly to pray. In his eleventh year, we read of his demonstrating, with a kind of solemn jocularity, the absurdity of an opinion which had been advanced by a boy of his own age, that the soul was material, and remained in the grave with the body till the resurrection. At twelve, we find him beginning a letter to one of his sisters thus: "Through the wonderful goodness and mercy of God, there has been in this place a very remarkable outpouring of the Spirit of God." He proceeds to inform his sister that he "has *reason to think* it is in some measure diminished, but he hopes not much, and that above thirty persons came commonly a Mondays to converse with father about their souls." At the same time, he exhibited in things not religious, an intelligence truly remarkable. He wrote, in his twelfth year, an elaborate description of "the wondrous way of the working of the forest spider," which shows that he possessed a rare talent for the observation of nature. One of the greatest of natural philosophers was lost to the world when Jonathan Edwards became a theologian.

At thirteen, he was one of the thirty-one students who, in 1716, composed Yale College, and there occurred the events which decided his career. "Toward the latter part of my

* The Life of President Edwards.—S. E. Dwight. New York: G. & C. & H. Carvill, 1830.

time at college," he wrote, "it pleased God to seize me with a pleurisy, in which he brought me nigh to the grave, and shook me over the pit of hell." Alarmed, the exemplary youth "made seeking his salvation the main business of his life"— with the usual evangelical result. The other event was, for his country and the Protestant world, far more important. It was his reception of what theologians call the doctrine of election.

From his childhood up, as he himself records, his ingenuous mind had revolted from the idea of "God's choosing whom he would to eternal life, and rejecting whom he pleased, leaving them eternally to perish and be everlastingly tormented in hell." But the time came when he thought he believed this doctrine. He could not tell how nor why. On a sudden, conviction flashed upon his mind, and what had once seemed a horrible doctrine, he contemplated with delight. Henceforth, the leisure of his life, and the best efforts of his intellect, were devoted to its elucidation. His treatise on the "Freedom of the Will," by which he is chiefly known to the recent world, is an ingenious attempt to make that reasonable, which, not through his reason, he had himself received. To reconcile the orthodox tenets with the facts of nature and the reason of man is the task at which the brain of New England grew large and the chest narrow. Of those who have lived and died in that vocation, the greatest and the best was Jonathan Edwards.

Nobler than any of his works was the life of this good man. He was one of those who have deliberately incurred obloquy and ruin for conscience' sake.

After leaving New York, he was a tutor in Yale College for a year or two, and was then chosen pastor of the church at Northampton. There, his preaching produced effects that have never been surpassed. His church became the largest Protestant society in the world. He stood at the head of the clerical profession in New England. The "great awakening," of which so much appears in the writings of that day, began in his church at Northampton, and extended to the remotest colony in America, to England, and to Scotland. He was the

first American author who achieved a European reputation; while he was yet a young man, sermons and volumes of his were republished in Great Britain and widely circulated. At home, wherever he preached, crowds hung upon the lips of the great Mr. Edwards of Northampton.

For twenty-three years he held this unequaled position, a shining light in the Protestant world, and dear to the pride of his own congregation. Then there arose a dispute between pastor and flock, whether saints and sinners were equally entitled to partake of the sacrament, or saints only. The pastor was for excluding, the flock for admitting, sinners. The people appealed to the established custom of the parish; the pastor, to the spirit and letter of the authoritative writings. The people grew warm, refused their minister a hearing on the point in dispute, and clamored for his dismissal. He was dismissed. Himself, his wife, his ten children, were suddenly deprived of the means of living, and in circumstances that made it unlikely that he would be again able to practice his profession.

That a company of Christian people, after having had for nearly a quarter of a century the best instructions in the principles of their faith that any congregation ever had, and that instruction enforced by a perfect example, should have been able thus to reward their religious teacher, is a fact, which those who are curious in moral causes and effects will always deem worthy of consideration.

On this trying occasion, Jonathan Edwards honored human nature by the quiet dignity and grand forbearance of his conduct. He accepted soon the humble post of missionary to the Indians of Stockbridge, and labored there, this ablest of living preachers and theologians, with no less zeal and devotion than he had shown in his prime of popularity. There, in the space of four months and a half, he wrote his treatise on the Will, which is the *Principia* of Calvinistic theology. He wrote it when he was so embarrassed that he procured with difficulty the necessary paper, and parts of the work, like Pope's Homer, were written on the backs of letters and the blank pages of pamphlets. His wife, a lady magnificently en

dowed in person and mind, his daughters, beautiful and full of talent, made lace and painted fans, which were sent to Boston for sale.

Esther, the third of these lovely, industrious daughters, was already eighteen years of age when the family removed to Stockbridge. Two years after, came to her home, on the edge of the wilderness, one of the most renowned and brilliant members of her father's profession. He stood over her, or sat near her, one may fancy, as she wove her lace or painted her fan-paper. He had an eye for a lady's hand, this clergyman. He was not one of those grim-looking persons whose portraits form the hideous frontispieces to the religious books of that period, but a gentleman whose style and manner would have graced a court. He staid only three days at Stockbridge, but after his departure the young maiden made no more lace and painted no more fans for the Boston ladies. Such, at least, was the gossip of the time, as one reads in letters which chance has preserved for the perusal of a prying biographer.

The Edwards stock is famous in New England. The remotest known ancestor of the race was a London clergyman in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Three generations of worthy, substantial persons, his descendants, lived in Connecticut. From Jonathan Edwards a surprising number of distinguished individuals have descended; men of worth, talent, and station: women, beautiful, accomplished, and gifted. Histories of the United States have been written in which his name does not occur; but upon every person reared since his day in New England he has made a discernible impression, and he influences, to this hour, millions who never heard his name. The thing he chiefly did in his life was this: the church and the world, two hostile bodies, were beginning, as it were, to relent toward one another, to approach, to mingle. Jonathan Edwards, with his subtle, feminine intellect and resolute will, threw himself between the two bodies, kept them apart, made more distinct than ever the line of demarcation, and rendered compromise between the two, perhaps, for ever impossible.

Such a man was the father of Aaron Burr's mother.

CHAPTER II.

THE REVEREND AARON BURR,

FATHER OF AARON BURR.

Outline of his early History—Pastor of Newark Church—A Great Schoolmaster—President of Princeton College—The First Commencement—Sudden Marriage of the President—His Writings—His Portrait.

The Reverend Aaron Burr was a conspicuous and important person in his day.

He came of a Puritan family which may have originated in Germany, where the name is still common, but which had flourished in New England for three generations, and had given to those provinces clergymen, lawyers, and civilians of some eminence. He was born at Fairfield, in Connecticut, in 1716, and graduated at Yale, with great distinction, in his nineteenth year. His proficiency in Latin and Greek enabled him to win one of the three Berkley scholarships, which entitled the possessor to a maintenance at college for two years after graduating. While he was pursuing his studies upon that endowment, he was arrested, as college students frequently were in those days, by a 'revival of religion.' He became a convert and a student of theology. "His human literature," to use the figure of one of his eulogists, "was thenceforward an obsequious handmaid, ever ready to set off and embellish his mistress, Divinity."

An account of his conversion, in his own words, has been preserved. It is remarkable, among other narratives of the kind for its concise exactness of expression. "This year," he says "God saw fit to open my eyes and show me what a miserable creature I was. Till then I had spent my life in a dream, and as to the great design of my being, had lived in vain. Though before, I had been under frequent convictions, and was driven

to a form of religion, yet I knew nothing as I ought to know But then I was brought to the footstool of sovereign grace, saw myself polluted by nature and practice, had affecting views of the divine wrath I deserved, was made to despair of help in myself, and almost concluded that my day of grace was past. It pleased God at length to reveal his Son to me in the gospel as an all-sufficient Saviour, and I hope inclined me to receive him on the terms of the gospel." Here is the whole body of Calvinistic divinity in a paragraph.

At the early age of twenty-two he was the settled and popular pastor of the Presbyterian church in Newark, New Jersey. Great 'revivals' followed his preaching. The placid but commanding eloquence of which he was, thus early in his career, a finished master, was, by many, more admired than the torrent-like vehemence of Whitefield, or the subtle argumentation of Edwards. We have a description of his mode of preaching from the pen of Governor Livingston of New Jersey, his friend in life, his eloquent eulogist after his death. "He was none of those downy doctors," said the governor, "who soothe their hearers into delusive hope of divine acceptance, or substitute external morality in the room of vital godliness. On the contrary, he scorned to proclaim the peace of God till the rebel laid down his arms, and returned to his allegiance. He was an embassador that adhered faithfully to his instructions, and never acceded to a treaty that would not be ratified in the court of heaven. He searched the conscience with the terrors of the law before he assuaged its anguish with the balm of Gilead, or presented the sweet emollients of a bleeding deity. He acted, in short, like one, not intrusted with the lives and fortunes, but the everlasting interests of his fellow mortals."

It was customary at that time for clergymen to receive pupils for instruction in the classical languages. Mr. Burr's reputation for eloquence and learning brought him so many boys that his private class grew rapidly into an important school. He kept ushers. He wrote a Latin grammar for the use of his pupils, which, under the name of the "Newark Grammar," was long the standard at Princeton. His success in teaching

was memorable. He possessed not only a happy method of giving instruction, but he had the rarer and higher art of infusing into his pupils his own enthusiastic love of learning and literature. He was an admirable teacher, jocund and winning, without losing or lessening his dignity or his authority.

To his labors as pastor, schoolmaster, and author, were afterward added those of the President of the College of New Jersey, an infant institution which his toil and tact fostered to a healthy and vigorous growth. An article in an old newspaper,* published when George the Second was king, enables us to see this excellent, indefatigable man on that triumphant day of his life when the college conferred its first degree, in the presence of the governor of the province, and a great concourse of people. With amusing particularity the writer narrates the august ceremonies of the day:

"His excellency (the governor) was preceded from his lodgings at the president's house, first, by the candidates walking in couples, uncovered; next followed the trustees, two and two, being covered; and, last of all, his excellency, the governor, with the president at his left hand. At the door of the place appointed for the public acts, the procession (amid a great number of spectators there gathered) was inverted, the candidates parting to the right and left hand, and the trustees in like manner. His excellency first entered with the president, the trustees went following in the order in which they were ranged in the charter, and, last of all, the candidates.

"Upon the bell ceasing, and the assembly being composed, the president began the public acts by solemn prayer to God, in the English tongue, for a blessing upon the public transactions of the day; upon his majesty, King George the Second, and the royal family; upon the British nation and dominions; upon the governor and government of New Jersey; upon all seminaries of true religion and good literature, and particularly upon the infant College of New Jersey. Which being concluded, the president, attended in the pulpit by the Rev. Thomas Arthur, who had been constituted clerk of the cor-

* Pennsylvania Journal, December 8th, 1748.

poration, desired, in the English tongue, the assembly to stand up and hearken to his majesty's royal charter, granted to the trustees of the College of New Jersey. Upon which, the assembly standing, the charter was distinctly read by the Rev. Mr. Arthur, with the usual endorsement by his majesty's attorney-general, and the certificate, signed by the secretary of the province, of its having been approved in council with his excellency. After this, the morning being spent, the president signified to the assembly that the succeeding acts would be deferred till two in the afternoon. Then the procession, in returning to the president's house, was made in the order before observed.

"The like procession was made in the afternoon as in the morning, and the assembly being seated in their places and composed, the president opened the public acts, first, by an elegant oration in the Latin tongue, delivered *memoriter*, modestly declaring his unworthiness and unfitness for so weighty a trust as had been reposed in him; apologizing for the defects that would unavoidably appear in his part of the present service; displaying the manifold advantages of the liberal arts and sciences in exalting and dignifying the human nature, enlarging the soul, improving the faculties, civilizing mankind, qualifying them for the important offices of life, and rendering men useful members of church and state. That to learning and the arts was chiefly owing the vast preëminence of the polished nations of Europe to the almost brutish savages in America, the sight of which last was the constant object of horror and commiseration.

"Then the president proceeded to mention the honor paid by our ancestors in Great Britain to the liberal sciences, by erecting and endowing those illustrious seminaries of learning which for many ages had been the honor and ornament of those happy isles, and the source of infinite advantages to the people there, observing that the same noble spirit had animated their descendants, the first planters of America, who, as soon as they were formed into a State, in the very infancy of time, had wisely laid religion and learning at the foundation of their commonwealth, and had always regarded them

as the firmest pillars of their church and State. That hence, very early, arose Harvard College, in New Cambridge, and afterward, Yale College, in New Haven, which have had a growing reputation for many years, and have sent forth many hundreds of learned men of various stations and characters in life, that in different periods have proved the honor and ornament of their country, and of which the one or the other had been the *alma mater* of most of the literati then present.

"That learning, like the sun in its western progress, had now begun to dawn upon the province of New Jersey, through the happy influence of its generous patron, their most excellent governor.

"These, and many other particulars, having, *more oratoria*, taken up three quarters of an hour, and the *Thesis* being dispersed among the learned in the assembly, the candidates, by command of the president, entered upon the public disputation, in Latin, in which six questions in philosophy and theology were debated, one of which was, whether the liberty of acting according to the dictates of conscience in matters merely religious, ought to be restrained by any human power? And it was justly held and concluded that liberty ought not to be restrained.

"Then the president, addressing himself to the trustees, in Latin, asked whether it was their pleasure that these young men who had performed the public exercises in disputation should be admitted to the degree of Bachelor of the Arts? Which being granted by his excellency in the name of all the trustees present, the president descended from the pulpit, and being seated with his head covered, received them two by two, and, according to the authority to him committed by the royal charter, after the manner of the academies in England, admitted his young scholars to the degree of Bachelor of the Arts.

"In the next place, his excellency, Jonathan Belcher, Esq., governor and commander-in-chief of the province of New Jersey, having declared his desire to accept from that college the degree of Master of Arts, the other trustees, in a just sense of the honor done the college by his excellency's conde-

scension, most heartily having granted his request, the president, rising uncovered, addressed himself to his excellency, and according to the same authority committed to him by the royal charter, after the manner of the academies of England, admitted him to the degree of Master of Arts.

"Then the president ascended the pulpit, and commanded the orator *salutatorius* to ascend the rostrum, who, being Mr. Samuel Thane, just before graduated Bachelor of the Arts, he in a modest and decent manner, first apologizing for his insufficiency, and then having spoken of the excellency of the liberal arts and sciences and of the numberless benefits they yielded to mankind in private and social life, addressed himself in becoming salutations and thanks to his excellency and the trustees, the president, and the whole assembly, all which being performed in good Latin, from his memory, in a handsome oratorical manner, in the space of about half an hour, the president concluded in English, with thanksgiving to heaven and prayer to God for a blessing on the scholars that had received the public honors of the day, and for the smiles of Heaven upon the infant College of New Jersey, and dismissed the assembly.

"All which being performed to the great satisfaction of all present, his excellency, with the trustees and scholars, returned to the house of the president in the order observed in the morning, where, after sundry by-laws were made, chiefly for regulating the studies and manners of the students, they agreed upon a corporation seal."

The president was only thirty-two years of age when these scenes transpired. He was a man small of stature, very handsome, with clear, dark eyes of a soft luster, quite unlike the piercing orbs of his son; a figure compactly formed, but somewhat slender, and with the bearing of a prince. The fascinating manner and lofty *style* of Mr. President Burr are frequently mentioned in the letters of the period. On this great occasion we can well believe that there was an impressive charm in his movements and delivery.

For eight years after his election to the presidency, he retained his church and his school, and traveled far and wide

in collecting funds for the college, and promoting lotteries for its benefit. And such were his talents for the dispatch of business that, while both the school and the church continued to prosper, the college increased in ten years from eight students to ninety; and from being an institution without house, land, endowment, or reputation, to one having all these in sufficiency.

A file of letters from one of Mr. Burr's pupils to his father, preserved by a happy chance among the papers of an old Philadelphia family, afford us, at this distance of time, an insight into the very class-room of the president. The beloved, the zealous, the enlightened teacher is exhibited in these letters. A single fact revealed in them is enough to prove him a superior and a catholic mind. And that fact is, that though the president was, perhaps, the first classical scholar in the provinces, he was also warmly interested in natural science, and eager to interest the students in it. He taught them himself how to calculate eclipses. On one occasion, when, after a long negotiation, he had induced a lecturer by the offer of forty pounds, to come from Philadelphia and exibit his philosophical apparatus, all other studies were laid aside for some weeks before the philosopher's arrival, in order that the students might derive the greatest possible advantage from witnessing the experiments. The lecturer, it appears, excited so much interest in "the newly-discovered fluid called electricity," that some of the students set about making small electrical machines.

In the midst of all this cheerful and wise activity occurred an event in Mr. Burr's history which gave the gossips of the province employment enough. Until his thirty-seventh year the president shamed the ladies of New Jersey by living a bachelor. In the summer of 1752, to the surprise of every one, and in a manner the most extraordinary, he wooed and wedded the lovely and vivacious Esther Edwards. Some hints of the oddity of this affair, which appeared in the New York *Gazette* for the 20th of July, 1752, the letters of the young gentleman just referred to enable us to explain. The writer in the *Gazette*, after mentioning the marriage, with due

praise of the wedded pair, remarked that he supposed there had not been for some centuries a courtship more in the patriarchal mode, and jocosely advised young gentlemen to follow the president's example, and endeavor to restore courtship and marriage to their original simplicity and design.

The young letter-writer's version of the story is the following: "In the latter end of May the president took a journey into New England, and during his absence he made a visit of but three days to the Rev. Mr. Edwards's daughter at Stockbridge; in which short time, though he had no acquaintance with, nor had ever seen, the lady these six years, I suppose he accomplished his whole design; for it was not above a fortnight after his return here, before he sent a young fellow (who came out of college last fall) into New England to conduct her and her mother down here. They came to town on Saturday evening, the 27th ult., and on the Monday evening following the nuptial ceremonies were celebrated between Mr Burr and the young lady. As I have yet no manner of acquaintance with her, I can not describe to you her qualifications and properties. However, they say she is a very valuable lady. I think her a person of great beauty; though I must say she is rather too young (being twenty-one years of age) for the president. This account you will doubtless communicate to mammy, as I know she has Mr. Burr's happiness much at heart."

Two weeks later he writes to his "dear mammy" on the engrossing subject: "I can't omit acquainting you that our president enjoys all the happiness the married state can afford. I am sure when he was in the condition of celibacy the pleasure of his life bore no comparison to that he now possesses. From the little acquaintance I have with his lady, I think her a woman of very good sense, of a genteel and virtuous education, amiable in her person, of great affability and agreeableness in conversation, and a very excellent economist. These qualifications may help you to form some idea of the person who lives in the sincerest mutual affections with Mr. Burr."

The marriage was speedily, but not rashly, concluded. The

president, it is probable, had not *seen* the young lady since she was fifteen; but at that age her father thought her woman enough to be a member of his church, and it was a characteristic of that cultivated and spiritualized family to come early to maturity.

Besides, the name of President Burr was a household word in the family of Jonathan Edwards. The two men, long associated in schemes for Christianizing the Indians, were also formed by nature to be friends, because each could see in the other admirable qualities wanting in himself. Edwards was reflective and studious, without tact or knowledge of the world, full of matter, but not skillful in wielding it. He lamented his awkward address and unimposing presence. "I have a constitution," he says in a well-known passage, "in many respects peculiarly unhappy, attended with flaccid solids, vapid, sizy, and scarce fluids, and a low tide of spirits; often occasioning a kind of childish weakness and contemptibleness of speech, presence, and demeanor, and a disagreeable dullness and stiffness, much unfitting me for conversation." Here we see the Student, who bent over his books fourteen hours a day, who took his meat and his drink by weight and measure, and whose utter sincerity rendered him powerless to subdue or to manage a fractious congregation. Admirable to such a man must have seemed the alert and brilliant Burr, so thoroughly alive, with every faculty at instant command, of dauntless self-possession, with a presence and address that invited confidence and disarmed impertinence. Burr, on his part, had modesty and good sense enough to know that, with all his shining qualities, he was no more the superior of Jonathan Edwards, than an armory is superior to the mine of ore from which the polished weapons of a thousand armories can be made. There was no need of a long courtship, then, for Esther Edwards to learn that Mr. President Burr was a man to make happy the woman he loved.

Besides the "Latin Grammar," Mr. Burr published a controversial "Letter" on the "Supreme Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ," which was reprinted in Boston thirty years after the author's death. An occasional sermon of his was also pub-

lished in his life-time. Two Latin orations by him have been preserved in manuscript, and many letters in English. One of these letters may close this chapter.

The letters of the religious people of those good old days give little insight into the individuality of the writers; human nature being under a theologic ban, and allowed to exhibit itself as little as possible. But the following letter* is an interesting relic, as it is characteristic of the age, if not of the man. It was written to a Mr. Hogg, a merchant in Scotland, where, by order of the kirk, a collection for the College of New Jersey was made in every parish. After acknowledging the unexpected magnitude of the Scottish contribution, the pious president proceeds:

"We have begun a building at Princeton, which contains a hall, library, and rooms to accommodate about an hundred students, though it will not any more of it be finished than is absolutely necessary at present—with an house for the president.

"We do every thing in the plainest and cheapest manner as far as is consistent with decency and convenience, having no superfluous ornaments. There was a necessity of our having an house sufficient to contain y^e^ students, as they could not lodge in private houses in that village where we have fixed the college; which, as it is the centre of the province, where provisions are plenty and firewood will always be cheap, is doubtless the fittest place we cou'd have pitch'd upon. The buildings prove more expensive than we at first imagin'd, from the best computations we could get; but by the smiles of heaven upon us we shall be able I think to compleat what we design at present; and have at least a fund left of £1,600 (sterling), which with the other income of the college, will be sufficient for the present officers and a little more, as money here will readily let for 7 per cent. interest with undoubted security. This fund will be encreased by what we get from Ireland, and a little more we expect from South Britain [*i. e.* England]; and we hope by the help of some generous benefactors here

* This letter was published, a year or two since, in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, of London, merely as a curiosity accidentally preserved.

and abroad to be able before long to support a Professor of Divinity. That office at present lies on the president, with a considerable part of the instruction in other branches of literature. The trustees have their eyes upon Mr. Edwards, and want nothing but ability to give him an immediate call to that office.

"The students in general behave well; some among them that give good evidences of real piety, and a prospect of special usefulness in the churches of Christ, are a great comfort and support to me under the burden of my important station.

"I may in my next give you a more particular account of the college. It is at present under flourishing circumstances in many respects; has grown in favor with men, [and] I would humbly hope [with] God also. 'Tis my daily concern that it may answer the important ends of its institution, and that the expectations of our pious friends at home and abroad may not be disappointed.

"I shall not fail to acknowledge my Lord Lothian's generosity. I am sorry Messrs. Tennant and Davies neglected seasonably to acquaint their friends in Scotland of their safe arrival, etc. I hope their long and tedious passage, and the confusion their affairs were probably in by their long absence, may be something of an excuse. I can testify that they retain a very lively sense of the most generous treatment y^{t} they and the college met with in those parts.

"The defeat of General Braddock was an awful but a seasonable rebuke of Heaven. Those that had the least degree of seriousness left could not but observe with concern the strange confidence in an arm of flesh and disregard to God and religion that appear'd in that army. Preparations were made for rejoicing at the victory, as tho' it had been ensured, and a day appointed for the obtaining it. The whole country were alarm'd and struck with astonishment at the news of his defeat, and some awaken'd to eye the high hand of God in it, who had tho't litle of it before; and I can't but think God has brought good to the land out of this evil.*

* A letter of Edwards, of nearly the same date, likewise contains some comments on these transactions. He says, "I had opportunity to see and con

"On the contrary, God was acknowledged in the army that went from Crown Point, vice and debauchery suppressed in a manner that has scarce been seen in this land, and was much admired at by those that saw it. This was much owing to Major-General Lyman, with whom I am well acquainted. He s a man of piety, and for courage and conduct, a spirit of government and good sense he has not his superior in these parts. He acquitted himself with uncommon bravery and good conduct in the engagement at Lake George, Sept. 8th, and it was owing to him, under God, y^t^ the victory was obtain'd, which prov'd a means of saving y^e^ country from ruin, as has since more fully appear'd by the scheme y^e^ French general had laid. I gave [have given] this hint about Mr. Lyman because Mr. Edward Cole, one of y^e^ officers, being offended y^t^ he banished some lewd women from the camp y^t^ he had brought with him, wrote a letter to scandalize him, hinting that he was a coward, tho' numbers that were in the

verse with ministers belonging to almost all parts of North America; and, among others, Mr. Davies of Virginia. He told me that he verily thought that General Braddock's defeat, the last summer, was a merciful dispensation of Divine Providence to those southern colonies. He said that notorious wickedness prevailed to that degree in that army, among officers and soldiers, and that they went forth openly in so self-confident and vain-glorious a manner, that if they had succeeded the consequence would have been a hardening of people in those parts, in a great degree, in a profane and atheistical temper, or to that purpose; and that many appeared very much solemnized by the defeat of that army, and the death of the general, and so many of the other chief officers; and some truly awakened. And by what I could learn it had something of the same effect among the people in New York and New Jersey. And the contrary success of the New England forces near Lake George, when violently attacked by Baron Dieskau and the regulars from France with him, who had been the chief French officer on the Ohio in the time of the engagement with General Braddock, one of which officers was killed by our forces and the other taken—I say the contrary success of the New England forces seemed to confirm the aforesaid effect; it being known by all how widely this army differed from the other, in the care that was taken to restrain vice and maintain religion in it; particularly by Major-General Lyman, the second officer in the army, a truly worthy man; a man of distinguished abilities and virtue, as well as uncommon martial endowments, who above any other officer was active in the time of the engagement."—*Letter to Dr Gillies*, December 12th 1755.

engagement have fully establish'd his character as one of the bravest officers, who expos'd himself in the hottest fire of the enemy, animating his men. And General Johnson himself acknowledges y^e^ honor of the day was due to Mr. Lyman.

"The state of these American Colonies at present looks dark. We are divided in our councils. Some are of such a spirit that they will forward nothing but what they are at the head of themselves. Several of the governors of the continent are now met at New York, to concert measures for the safety of [the] country. Much will depend on the result of this meeting. When I consider y^e^ crying iniquities of the day I cannot but tremble for fear of God's judgments that seem to hang over this sinning land.

"I have lately had a letter from Stockbridge, Mr. Edwards and his family are in usual health, except his daughter Betty, who is never well, and I believe not long for this world. Their situation is yet distressing, thro' fear of the enemy. My wife joins me in respectful and affectionate salutations to you and your son. I add but my poor prayers and ardent wishes y^t^ your declining days may be fill'd with comfort and usefulness, y^t^ you may have a late and an abundant entrance into y^e^ everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen."

This was the quality, these were the deeds of the father of Aaron Burr.

The college at Princeton is his monument; its very walls testify to his thoroughness and integrity. The interior of the main building has twice been destroyed by fire, but the builders who are restoring the edifice declare that no walls which they could now erect would equal in strength those which were constructed under the superintendence of President Burr. The house which he built for his own residence has been occupied by the presidents of the college ever since. Its solid structure, and spacious, lofty apartments, seem still to testify to the liberal mind and hand of him who planned it.

The portrait of President Burr, which is preserved in the college library, is a careful copy of an original that was lost and injured during the Revolution, but afterward discovered

and restored. Fineness of fiber, refinement, and utter purity of mind, energy, serenity, and seraphic benevolence, are equally expressed in this picture. Near to it leans upon the wall Peale's vast portrait of Washington, the most physical of all the portraits of Washington that were taken from life. The contrast is striking. That one of these men should be universally accepted, without questioning, as our greatest and best, while the other is scarcely known, compels the spectator to doubt the correctness of one or the other of these portraits.

CHAPTER III.

AARON BURR BORN, AND LEFT AN ORPHAN.

REMOVAL TO PRINCETON — LAST LABORS AND DEATH OF PRESIDENT BURR — CHARACTER AND DEATH OF MRS. BURR — THE ORPHANED CHILDREN — SARAH BURR.

Two children blessed the union of President Burr with Esther Edwards; Sarah Burr, born May 3d, 1754; and AARON BURR, born February 6th, 1756. Newark, in New Jersey, was the birth-place of both these children.

The college buildings at Princeton were nearly completed when Aaron was born. In the autumn of that year, the removal took place; the college of New Jersey added a local habitation to its well-earned name. The president, to the great sorrow of his congregation, resigned the pastorship of the Newark church, which he had served for twenty years with the ever-growing love of its members. The good people would scarcely let him go. They said that the connection between pastor and flock, like that between husband and wife, was indissoluble, except by death or infidelity. To this day, the First Presbyterian church* of Newark cherishes with affectionate pride the memory of this man, eminent among the many eminent men who have stood in its pulpit.

To Princeton, then, the president and his family removed late in the year 1756. A letter by one of the trustees of the college at that time, sets forth that "the salary of the president is two hundred pounds proclamation money, with the perquisites, amounting at present to about thirty pounds, and yearly increasing; a large, well-finished dwelling-house, gardens, barn, out-houses, etc., with a considerable quantity of pasture-ground and firewood, do also belong to the president."

* History of the First Church at Newark, N. J., by Rev. Dr. Stearns.

All this was, probably, equal to an income of three thousand dollars at the present time.

And now, having lived to establish on a firm foundation the College of New Jersey, President Burr's work on earth was done. The manner of his death was in keeping with his character. At the end of the summer of 1757, in very hot weather, he made one of his swift journeys to Stockbridge. What it was to *travel*, a hundred years ago, is sufficiently known. Returning rapidly to Princeton, he went immediately to Elizabethtown, a hard day's ride, to procure from the authorities there a legal exemption of the students from military duty. The next day, though much indisposed, he preached a funeral sermon at Newark, five miles distant. Then he returned to Princeton. In a few days he went to Philadelphia on other business of the college, and, on his return, was met by the intelligence that his friend, and the college's friend, Governor Belcher, had just died at Elizabethtown, and that himself had been designated to preach the funeral sermon. His wife besought him to be just to himself, and decline the office. But he, accustomed to subdue obstacles, and desirous to do honor to his departed friend, sat down, all fatigued and feverish as he was, to prepare his sermon. Before he slept, it was finished. That night he was delirious, but in the morning he set off for Elizabethtown; and on the day following, with a languor and exhaustion he could no longer conceal, he preached the sermon. Unconquered yet, he next day returned home, where his fever, from being intermittent, became fixed and violent. At the approach of death, he was resigned and cheerful. He felt assured of immortality. On his death-bed he gave orders that his funeral should be as inexpensive as was consistent with decency, and that the sum thus saved should be given to the poor. On the 24th of September, 1757, in the forty-second year of his age, this good man died.

His death was widely and sincerely mourned. His funeral sermon; the eulogiums pronounced upon him by the Governor of New Jersey; the notices of his death in the public journals, and many private letters in which the sad event is mentioned

have come down to us; and all speak of him in terms that would seem extravagant eulogy to one unacquainted with the noble heart, the brilliant intellect, the beneficent life of President Burr. In the letters of his wife, it is easy to see *through* the pious phraseology of the day, the heart-broken woman. "O, dear madam," writes the poor bereaved lady to her mother, "I doubt not but I have your, and my honored father's prayers, daily, for me; but, give me leave to intreat you both, to request earnestly of the Lord that I may never despise his chastenings, nor faint under this his severe stroke; of which I am sensible there is great danger, if God should only deny me the supports that he has hitherto graciously granted. O, I am afraid I shall conduct myself so as to bring dishonor on my God, and the religion which I profess! No, rather let me die this moment than be left to bring dishonor on God's holy name. I am overcome. I must conclude, with once more begging that, as my dear parents remember themselves, they would not forget their greatly-afflicted daughter (now a lonely widow), nor her fatherless children."

A letter to her father, written a month after the above, besides being very pathetic, contains allusions to her boy, then twenty-one months old: "Since I wrote my mother a letter, God has carried me through new trials, and given me new supports. My little son has been sick with a slow fever, ever since my brother left us, and has been brought to the brink of the grave; but, I hope in mercy, God is bringing him back again. I was enabled, after a severe struggle with nature, to resign the child with the greatest freedom. God showed me that the children were not my own, but his, and that he had a right to recall what he had lent, whenever he thought fit; and that I had no reason to complain, or say that God was hard with me. This silenced me. But O how good is God. He not only kept me from complaining, but comforted me, by enabling me to offer up my child by faith, if ever I acted faith. I saw the fulness there was in Christ for little infants, and his willingness to accept of such as were offered to him. 'Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not;' were comforting words. God also showed me, in such a lively

manner, the fulness there was in himself of all spiritual blessings, that I said, 'Although all streams are cut off, yet so long as my God lives, I have enough.' He enabled me to say, 'Although thou slay me, yet will I trust in thee.' In this time of trial, I was led to enter into a renewed and explicit covenant with God, in a more solemn manner than ever before; and with the greatest freedom and delight, after much self-examination and prayer, I did give myself and my children to God, with my whole heart. Never, until then, had I an adequate sense of the privilege we are allowed in covenanting with God. This act of soul left my mind in a great calm, and steady trust in God. A few days after this, one evening, in talking of the glorious state my dear departed husband must be in, my soul was carried out in such large desires after that glorious state, that I was forced to retire from the family to conceal my joy. When alone I was so transported, and my soul carried out in such eager desires after perfection and the full enjoyment of God, and to serve him uninterruptedly, that I think my nature would not have borne much more. I think, dear sir, I had that night, a foretaste of heaven. This frame continued, in some good degree, the whole night. I slept but little, and when I did, my dreams were all of heavenly and divine things. Frequently since, I have felt the same in kind, though not in degree. This was about the time that God called me to give up my child. Thus a kind and gracious God has been with me, in six troubles and in seven."

In these utterances of a broken heart struggling against the impiety of despair, there is no trace of the peculiar character of Aaron Burr's mother. Of the children of Jonathan Edwards, not one was a common-place person, and scarcely one even of his grandchildren. But Mrs. Burr was, perhaps, the flower of the family. One of her relations has written of her these sentences: "She exceeded most of her sex in the beauty of her person, as well as in her behavior and conversation. She discovered an unaffected, natural freedom, toward persons of all ranks, with whom she conversed. Her genius was much more than common. She had a lively, sprightly imagination, a quick and penetrating discernment, and a good judgment.

She possessed an uncommon degree of wit and vivacity; which yet was consistent with pleasantness and good nature; and she knew how to be facetious and sportive, without trespassing on the bounds of decorum, or of strict and serious religion. In short, she seemed formed to please, and especially to please one of Mr. Burr's taste and character, in whom he was exceedingly happy. But what crowned all her excellences, and was her chief glory, was RELIGION. She appeared to be the subject of divine impressions when seven or eight years old; and she made a public profession of religion when about fifteen. Her conversation, until her death, was exemplary, as becometh godliness. She was, in every respect, an ornament to her sex, being equally distinguished for the suavity of her manners, her literary accomplishments, and her unfeigned regard to religion. Her religion did not cast a gloom over her mind, but made her cheerful and happy, and rendered the thought of death transporting. She left a number of manuscripts, on interesting subjects, and it was hoped they would have been made public; but they are now lost."

Death had only begun his fell work in their family. Jonathan Edwards was immediately elected to succeed Mr. Burr in the presidency of the college. Soon after his arrival at Princeton, he heard of the death of his father, a venerable clergyman of Connecticut, in the eighty-ninth year of his age. Two months after, before he had fully entered upon his duties as president, died Jonathan Edwards himself, of a fever which followed inoculation for small-pox. Sixteen days after, of a similar disease, Mrs. Burr died. Her two orphaned children were taken from her funeral to the house of an old friend of the family in Philadelphia, where they remained six months. In the fall of the same year, the widow of Jonathan Edwards went to Philadelphia with the intention of conveying the little orphans to her own home, and bringing them up with her own children. At Philadelphia, she was seized with the dysentery, and she too died. Thus within a period of thirteen months, these children were of father, mother, great grandfather, and grand parents, all bereft; and there was no one left in the

wide world whose chief concern it could be to see that they received no detriment.

All but the great grandfather lie buried at Princeton, where the virtues and graces of the two presidents are elaborately set forth in lapidary Latin. Strange to say, some of the letters respecting the carving of President Burr's tomb-stone have escaped the chances of destruction for a hundred years, and are still legible to the biographic eye.

President Burr left his children considerable property; enough for their independent maintenance, even in maturity. They were reared at Elizabethtown, New Jersey, in the family of the Hon. Timothy Edwards, President Edwards's eldest son. A private tutor, Mr. Tappan Reeve, afterward Judge of the Supreme Court of Connecticut, superintended their earliest studies, and in due time fell in love with his pretty pupil, Sarah Burr, and when she was seventeen married her. That she loved her brother dearly, is all that is known of Sarah Burr's childhood. One of Aaron's early correspondents says that she approved of her brother's going to the war in 1775, which, he adds, "is a great proof of patriotism in a sister so affectionate as yours." She was of a noble, commanding face and figure. As she was for many years an invalid, and died at a comparatively early age, she had little to do with her brother's life, though she left upon his memory a tender recollection of her worth and loveliness, which he cherished and spoke of to his dying day.

Note.—Since the publication of the first edition of this work, it has been discovered that the private journal of Aaron Burr's mother is still in existence. The following is her description of Aaron when he was thirteen months old: "January 31, 1758.—Aaron is a little, dirty, noisy boy, very different from Sally almost in everything. He begins to talk a little; is very sly and mischievous. He has more sprightliness than Sally, and most say he is handsome, but not so good tempered. He is very resolute, and requires a good governor to bring him to terms."

CHAPTER IV.

THE EDUCATION OF AARON BURR.

ELIZABETHTOWN—ANECDOTES OF BURR'S CHILDHOOD—HIS CAREER AT COLLEGE—GOES TO DR. BELLAMY'S THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL—REJECTS THE PURITANIC THEOLOGY—FONI OF LADIES' SOCIETY—STUDIES LAW.

ELIZABETHTOWN was then, as it is now, a village containing an unusual proportion of polite families. It had been the residence of the governor and other officials of the province. The vicinity is a level, red-soiled, unattractive region; but a little river flows through it, emptying, at a point one mile from the village, into Staten Island Sound, which is part of the intricate system of waters that affords so many beautiful highways to the city of New York. That city is fifteen miles distant. Within excursion distance is Staten Island, where, during Aaron Burr's childhood, large bodies of British troops were frequently encamped.

From the three anecdotes of Burr's childhood, which have come down to us, we may infer that he was a troublesome ward to his reverend uncle. That gentleman, a strict and conscientious Puritan, tried the system of *repression* upon a boy who could not be repressed; and the result was, that the young gentleman was frequently in a state of rebellion. The authority for these anecdotes was Colonel Burr himself, who used to relate the two principal ones with great glee.

When he was four years old, he took offense at his tutor and ran away. He contrived to elude the search for three or four days, and—there the story ends.

About his eighth year, the following incident occurred: He was in a cherry-tree in his uncle's garden, one fine afternoon in July, when he observed, coming up the walk, an elderly lady, a guest of the house, wearing a silk dress, which

was then a rare luxury. The prim behavior and severe morality of this ancient maiden had made her a somewhat odious object in the sight of the boy. Concealed in the tree, he amused himself by throwing cherries at her: upon observing which, she angrily sought Uncle Timothy, to tell him of Aaron's misconduct. The boy was summoned to the study, where the case was treated in the severe Puritanic method. First came a long lecture upon the enormity of the offense; which was followed by a long prayer for the offender's reformation From the beginning of these ceremonies, the boy well knew how they were to end, and he could form an idea of the severity of the coming punishment from the length of the prayer and exhortation. A terrible castigation followed; or, as Burr used to phrase it, "he licked me like a sack."

Those were the days, it should be borne in mind, when the old received something like *homage* from the young. The children of Jonathan Edwards, for example, rose at the entrance of their parents; and when they met in the street a clergyman or old person, they stood aside, took off their hats, and bowed, and waited till the reverend individual had gone by. In the eyes of Uncle Timothy, therefore, the boy's affront to his elderly guest would seem a crime of audacious magnitude.

At the age of ten, Aaron had the fancy which besets most active boys once during their childhood, to go to sea. A second time he ran away. He went to New York, took the post of cabin-boy on board a ship getting ready for sea, and actually served in that capacity for a short time. But, one day while he was at work on the quarter-deck, he spied a suspicious clerical-looking gentleman coming rapidly down the wharf, who, he soon saw, was his uncle, bent on the capture of a cabin-boy. He sprang into the rigging, and before his uncle got on board the ship, had climbed to the mast-head. He saw his advantage, and resolved to profit by it. He was ordered down, but refused to come. As his uncle was a gentleman who would have been nowhere less at home than at the mast-head of a ship, the command had to soften itself into an entreaty, and it became, finally, a negotiation. Upon the

condition that nothing disagreeable should befall him in consequence of the adventure, the runaway agreed to descend, and go home again to his books.

These little stories exhibit the rebel merely. A decisive fact or two of an opposite nature has been preserved. Pierpont Edwards, another uncle of Aaron Burr's, but only six years his senior, was his schoolfellow for a while at Elizabethtown. One of Pierpont's letters, written when Aaron was seven years old, contains this sentence: "Aaron Burr is here, is hearty, goes to school, *and learns bravely*." The fact of Pierpont Edwards being Burr's schoolfellow, and one who, from his age, talents, and relationship, would be likely to exert great influence upon him, should be noted; for Pierpont Edwards, besides being a great lawyer, was also a remarkably free liver.

There is other testimony to Aaron's diligence as a student. At the age of eleven he was prepared for college, and applying for admission at Princeton, was rejected on account of his youth. He was not only too young, but the smallness of his stature made the application seem ridiculous. He was then a strikingly pretty boy, very fair, with beautiful black eyes, and such graceful, engaging ways as rendered him a favorite. What the qualifications were for admission into college, at that time, may be inferred from another remark in the letter of Pierpont Edwards just quoted. "I am reading Virgil and Greek grammar," he says; "I would have entered college, but my constitution would not bear it, being weak." A boy able to read Virgil, and who knew the Greek alphabet, could have obtained admission into the Freshman class at Princeton at that time. But, considering the imperfect aids to the acquisition of the language which schoolboys then had, we may assign the character of a forward and industrious boy to one who was ready for college at the age of eleven.

This rejection on account of his want of years and inches was a source of deep mortification to the aspiring lad. He did his best, however, to frustrate the college authorities by mastering at home the studies of the first two college years, and then in his thirteenth year, applying for admission into

the Junior class. This, too, was denied him; and, more as a favor than as a right, he was allowed to enter the Sophomore class. He should have been fifteen years old to have joined the Sophomores. It was in 1769, during the presidency of Dr. Witherspoon, a Scotch clergyman, in whose veins flowed the blood of John Knox, that Aaron Burr began his residence at Princeton.

His career at college was similar to that of thousands of American youth. He went to Princeton with extravagant ideas of the acquirements of collegians; but with a resolution to be equal with the foremost. The first year he studied excessively hard. Finding that he could not acquire as well in the afternoon as in the morning, and attributing the fact to his eating too much, he became very abstemious, and was then able to study sixteen, and occasionally eighteen, hours a day. He became pale, and was supposed to be in ill health. When the day of examination came, he found himself so much in advance of his classmates, that the motive to such extraordinary exertions no longer existed, and, thenceforward, he was as idle as he had formerly been industrious.

It has been said, and apparently on his own authority, that he was dissipated at college; but his dissipation could scarcely have been of an immoral nature. Princeton was then a very small village, nearly surrounded by dense forests, in the midst of a region containing, at wide intervals, a settlement of Quakers or Dutch. There was no large town or navigable water within many miles. The village was the half-way station, on the high road between New York and Philadelphia, travelers to either of which would usually stop at Princeton at night. A coach load of people, and several other travelers, were at the tavern nearly every night in the week. For their amusement, a billiard table was kept in the place, but Burr played only one game. On that occasion, it chanced that he won a small sum, and on going home, he felt so degraded by the circumstance, that he resolved never more to play at any game for money; and he kept his resolution. At the tavern, too, the students could procure the luxuries of the table. But Burr, then and always, was a Spartan in eating

and drinking. And with regard to guiltier pleasures, he was but sixteen when he graduated; the place of his residence was rustic and Puritanic Princeton; and the time was not far removed from the days of the "Scarlet Letter." It was not till after he had left college that he adopted the opinions which took the reins of passion out of the hands of conscience, and gave them into those of prudence.

Part of Burr's dissipation in college was merely a dissipation of mind in multifarious reading. That he was versed in the polite literature of the day, is evident in his compositions. He was, also, a constant reader of the lives and histories of great military men. During Burr's boyhood, the fame of Frederic the Great filled the world. The Seven Years' War began when he was in the cradle, and the most brilliant achievements of the great captain were fresh in men's minds while the youth was in his susceptible years. As the supposed champion of Protestantism against the leagued Catholic powers, Frederic was greatly admired in the American provinces, and the splendor of his reputation may have had its share in giving Burr his life-long love for the military profession. The old French war, too, was not concluded when Burr first saw the light. The provinces were full of wild tales of that most romantic of contests, during all of his earlier years. And long before he left college, were heard the mutterings of the coming storm which was to summon from their retirement, and crown with new laurels, so many of the rustic soldiers who had won distinction in that toughly-contested forest war which secured this continent to the race which holds it now.

A college freak of Burr's excited a great deal of mirth among the students at the time. He was a member of a literary club, the Clio-Sophic, the members of which presided at its meetings in rotation. On one occasion, when Burr was in the chair, a professor of the college, from whom he had received many an unwelcome admonition, chanced to come in after the business of the evening had commenced. Burr, assuming as much of professorial dignity as his diminutive stature admitted, and with that imperturbable self-possession for which he was distinguished, ordered the professor to rise. He

then began to lecture the delinquent upon his want of punctuality, observing that the older members of the society were expected to set a better example to the younger, and concluding with a hope that he should not be under the necessity of recurring again to the subject. Having thus given the professor a parody of one of those harangues which preceptors are prone to bestow upon neglectful pupils, he informed him that he might resume his seat; which the astonished gentleman did, amid the merriment of the society. This story used to be told of Burr at Princeton, years after he had left college.

His college compositions, of which several have been preserved, indicate an unusual maturity in a youth of fifteen years. *Style* is the subject of one of them, the burden of which is to recommend conciseness and simplicity, which were always the characteristics of his own writings. "A labored style is labor even to the hearer," observes the young critic, "but, a simple style, like simple food, preserves the appetite." He contends for a *colloquial* manner, and mentions Sir Thomas Browne's Treatise on "Vulgar Errors" as an example of absurd pomposity. "There is no such thing," remarks the youth, "as a *sublime style;* sublimity is in the *thought*, which is rendered the more sublime by being expressed in simple language." This is not the usual tone of a college composition. Another of Burr's college essays, is on *The Passions.* He could not have read Goethe's oft-declaimed observation, "Man alone is interesting to Man," because Goethe at this time was himself a college student at Strasbourg; yet Burr opens his discourse upon the passions quite in the spirit of the Goethean maxim. Nor could he have known the office assigned the passions by phrenologists, for Gall was then a boy three years old; yet he says that the grand design of the passions is to rouse to action the sluggish powers of the mind. "The passions," he adds, "if properly regulated, are the gentle gales which keep life from stagnating, but, if let loose, the tempests which tear every thing before them." He continues in the following strain: "Do we not frequently behold men of the most sprightly genius, by giving the reins to their passions, lost to

society, and reduced to the lowest ebb of misery and despair? Do we not frequently behold persons of the most penetrating discernment and happy turn for polite literature, by mingling with the sons of sensuality and riot, blasted in the bloom of life? Such was the fate of the late celebrated Duke of Wharton, Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, and Villers, Duke of Buckingham, three noblemen, as eminently distinguished by their wit, taste, and knowledge, as for their extravagance, revelry and lawless passions. In such cases, the most charming elocution, the finest fancy, the brightest blaze of genius, and the noblest bursts of thought, call for louder vengeance, and damn them to lasting infamy and shame." He says, in conclusion, "Permit me, however unusual, to close with a wish. May none of these unruly passions ever captivate any of my audience."

One of these college pieces, entitled "An Attempt to Search the Origin of Idolatry," is interesting, as showing that the writer, whatever may have been his subsequent opinions, was, while in college, a sharer in the faith of his fathers. His conclusion is, that the accursed Ham, or his accursed sons, were the inventors of idol worship. An incidental opinion expressed in this piece is, that atheism is more odious than idolatry.

It is unsafe to infer the character of a writer from the character of his writings, as the power of some writers consists in an ability to give striking expression to emotions which they merely see it would be highly becoming in them to feel. But we would scarcely believe this of a boy of fifteen. So far as Burr's youthful essays do reveal his character, they seem to show that, at this period of his life, he possessed an acute intellect, an independent habit of thought, and an ingenuous, amiable disposition. During Burr's last winter in college, there occurred one of those periodical excitements with regard to religion which were so important a feature in the early history of the provinces; an excitement similar to that which had diverted Burr's grandfather from natural science to theology, and won his father from the enthusiastic pursuit of classical literature. This revival was one of more than ordinary intensity, and a large number of the students became converts

Burr, then very idle, and devoted to such pleasures as the rustic neighborhood afforded, was urged both by the professors and by his companions, to renounce his way of life and follow the example of his eminent ancestors. But he held quietly aloof. As the excitement increased, his friends redoubled their efforts. They appealed to his fears, threatening him with all the terrific penalties of the law, if *he*, descended from such illustrious exemplars of the faith, *he*, the son of a father so eloquent in its promulgation, of a mother who had so longed and importuned for his conversion, should finally become a castaway. Burr confessed that he was moved by this revival. He respected the religion of his mother; he had taken for granted the creed in which he had been educated. Therefore, though he was repelled by the wild excitement that prevailed, and disgusted by the means employed to excite terror, his mind was not at ease. He consulted Dr. Witherspoon in this perplexity. The clergymen of the time were divided in opinion upon the subject of revivals: those educated in the old country being generally opposed to them. President Witherspoon was of that number, and he accordingly told the anxious student that the raging excitement was fanatical, not truly religious, and Burr went away relieved.

It is not unlikely that if the promoters of that revival had appealed solely to his sense of the becoming and the just, Aaron Burr might have been won to their views, and might have lived over again, on a greater scale, and with greater results, the life of his father. But the attempt to strike terror in the soul of one who never knew what it was to be afraid, was a failure, of course.

A habit formed by Burr, at college, had an important influence upon his fortunes at the critical point of his career. It was the habit of writing his confidential letters *in cipher*. The practice was common at the time. The letters of all the eminent men of the revolutionary period, Washington, Jefferson Hamilton, Adams, and the rest, contained evidence of *an habitual distrust of the public conveyance of letters*. This distrust existed before the Revolution, during the Revolution, and after the Revolution: down, in fact, to the time when the

mere multitude of letters was their best protection. The fear was not so much that letters would not reach their destination, as that they would be read on the way. Burr's practice, therefore, of writing in cipher to his sister and to his classmates, was in conformity with the feeling and habit of the time, and not merely an evidence of a peculiarly secretive character. But he was secretive—often absurdly so—as his adoption of this custom in his boyish correspondence might have led one to suspect.

He formed friendships in college that ended only with life. William Patterson, afterward a Judge of the Supreme Court of the United States; the gallant Colonel Matthias Ogden, of New Jersey; Samuel Spring, who became a distinguished divine, and who was the father of Dr. G. Spring, a still more eminent theologian, were among those whom he loved at college, and who loved him while they lived. Samuel Spring became a student of theology at Newport before Burr graduated, and he wrote to his friend upon the charms of divinity, and in a modest, manly way, urged him to fulfill the hopes of his parents by devoting himself to the same pursuit.

In September, 1772, when he was sixteen years of age, Burr graduated at the College of New Jersey with distinction. He delivered an oration on commencement-day with considerable, but not distinguished, applause. His manner and bearing were graceful. The matter of his discourse was good, but he spoke with uneffective rapidity, and with an emphasis so frequent and intense as to partly defeat the object of emphasis. Nevertheless, his friend Patterson was of opinion that, if Burr was not the best of the speakers, there was but one who excelled him.

He continued to live at Princeton for several months after receiving his degree, during which he read extensively, reviewed some of his college studies, added many volumes to his collection of books, took part in the exercises of the Clio-Sophic Society, and amused himself to the extent afforded by the place in which he lived. His income was ample for the maintenance of a young man, and he was in no haste to choose a profession. In the spring and summer of 1773, he was

much at Elizabethtown. One of his favorite pleasures there was boating, an amusement for which the neighboring waters afford facilities perhaps unrivaled in the world. Burr knew every inlet and islet of those waters, and could manage a boat with much skill. The experience gained in his aquatic excursions there was turned by him to excellent account on several occasions in his subsequent career of adventure and vicissitude.

A year of busy idleness the youth passed in these scenes before he began to think seriously of the future. After leaving college, and indeed long before, he was quite his own master, his uncle having early relinquished his endeavors to control the movements of a ward who knew how, in all circumstances, to have his own way. But a profession was now to be chosen. His relations, the friends of his father, and many in whose memory the mother of this youth was still most fresh and fragrant, hoped, *expected*, that he would, in due time, be attracted to the profession which so many of his ancestors had adorned. Not wantonly, nor hastily did he decide to disappoint these expectations. The uneasiness of mind which had been created during the great revival at Princeton, had been allayed, but not removed, by his conversation with Dr. Witherspoon, and he was now determined upon settling his theologic difficulties for ever. A mind so active, penetrating, and fearless as his, *must* have come in contact with the skepticism that was then the rage in Europe, and which had captivated the Jeffersons and Franklins of America. He could not have escaped it, for it pervaded the books which he was most sure to be drawn to. He resolved, therefore, instead of subjecting himself to be tried *by* the theology of the day, which was what his pious friends desired, to put that theology itself upon trial.

Dr. Joseph Bellamy, of Bethlehem, Connecticut, who had studied theology under Jonathan Edwards, was, in some degree, the inheritor of his master's preëminent position in the clerical world. Great was his fame as a preacher. His published works were popular in his life-time, and continued to be printed many years after his death; and so many candidates

for the ministry repaired to him for instruction in divinity, that his house assumed something of the importance of a theological seminary. To this learned and famous doctor, young Burr addressed himself, and requested permission to reside in his school while he was employed in the study of theology. With the joyful consent of his guardian, and to the great satisfaction of Doctor Bellamy, Burr, in the autumn of 1773, went to live in the doctor's family, and entered at once with his usual ardor upon the investigations he had proposed to himself. Doctor Bellamy, it appears, was one of the gentlemen who plumed themselves upon their skill in the Socratic or question-asking method of argumentation in which Franklin, among many others of the time, took great delight. The object of the honest divine was, as we said, to prevent his pupils from taking any dogma for granted, or from accepting their opinions without consideration from the lips of their teacher. Sometimes he would exchange with one of them the part of Socrates, himself playing disciple, and submitting to as severe a course of questions as the skill of the young gentleman enabled him to devise.

This were a dangerous game to play with a lad of Burr's mettle. When both Socrates and disciple are perfectly agreed beforehand as to the conclusion to which the argument is to conduct them; when, in a word, the exercise is merely *play*, it may be amusing and satisfactory. But when the disciple has begun to suspect that Socrates is behind the age, inasmuch as the choice spirits of the age are not at all of his way of thinking, and when that disciple, beside being utterly fearless of the consequences of dissent, possessed a remarkable address and imperturbable coolness in arranging his questions; in such circumstances, Socrates is likely to lose a pupil. Between Dr. Bellamy and Aaron Burr, precisely the same catastrophe occurred as came to pass a year or two later in Germany between young Jean Paul and the Conrector of the Hof Gymnasium.

The zealous conrector, as we read in Carlyle's exquisite article upon Jean Paul, desirous to render his school as much like a university as possible, had public disputations in the

school occasionally. "By ill-luck one day, the worthy president had selected some church-article for the theme of such a disputation; one boy was to defend, and it fell to Paul's lot to impugn the dogma; a task he was very specially qualified to undertake. Now, honest Paul knew nothing of the limits of this game; never dreamt but he might argue with his whole strength, to whatever results it might lead. In a few rounds, accordingly, his antagonist was borne out of the ring, as good as lifeless; and the conrector himself, seeing the danger, had, as it were, to descend from his presiding chair, and clap the gauntlets on his own more experienced hands. But Paul, nothing daunted, gave him also a Roland for an Oliver; nay, as it became more and more manifest to all eyes, was fast reducing him also to the frightfullest extremity. The conrector's tongue threatened cleaving to the roof of his mouth, for his brain was at a stand, or whirling in eddies, only his gall was in active play. Nothing remained for him but to close the debate abruptly by a '*Silence, sirrah, and leave the room.*'"

All over the world, in that century of skepticism, similar scenes were transpiring. At Oxford, in England, as Bentham records, "infidelity" was the fashion; there were Atheist's clubs in the university. A few years later, a similar state of things existed at Yale, which required all the eloquence and tact of the able President Dwight to suppress.

A few months' residence with Dr. Bellamy sufficed for Burr. We soon find him writing to his friend Ogden, at Elizabethtown, that he had the good old doctor completely *under his thumb!* Ogden replies that he is glad to hear it; and proceeds to give Burr the gossip of the fashionable society at New York. In the summer of 1774, Burr left Dr. Bellamy with the conviction, to use his own language, that "the road to heaven was open to all alike." In other words, he rejected the gospel, according to Jonathan Edwards; rejected it, as he always maintained, after a calm and full investigation; rejected it completely and for ever. To the close of his life, he avoided disputes upon questions of religion; and when, on one or two occasions only, he was drawn into such a discussion, he re-

proached himself for his folly afterward. Often he was addressed by relatives, anxious to see him treading in the footsteps of his father. Often letters were sent him, warning him to repent. He neither resented nor regarded these well-meant endeavors; but waived them aside with good-humored grace, and sometimes even with tenderness.

The gospel which the young man accepted, lived by and died in, was the gospel according to Philip Dormer Stanhope, Lord Chesterfield; which, from Burr's day to this, has been cultivated Young America's usual poor recoil from the Puritanism of its childhood. Chesterfield himself was not a more consummate Chesterfieldian than Aaron Burr. The intrepidity, the self-possession, the consideration for others, the pursuit of knowledge, which Chesterfield commends, were all illustrated in the character of the young American, who also availed himself of the *license* which that perfect man of the world allowed himself, and recommended to his son.

The summer of 1774 Burr spent at Litchfield, Connecticut, at the house of Mr. Tappan Reeve, his brother-in-law. He had decided to study law, but, in no haste to begin, he passed some months in reading, riding, hunting, and flirting. Already, he possessed that power of pleasing the fair for which he was afterward noted, and already officious relations began to speculate upon him as a subject for matrimony. Uncle Thaddeus Burr, as we learn from one of Aaron's letters, had his eye upon a young lady, whose person and fortune he was fond of extolling in his handsome nephew's hearing. But the nephew was deaf and dumb on those occasions, and resolved, at length, to be round with Uncle Thaddeus, when next he should indulge in these broad hints. At the same time, the young beau was all gallantry to the ladies, who evidently occupied themselves more than a little in gossiping about him; but he seems to have distributed his attentions so equally among them all, that no two people could agree on the same lady to tease him with. One lady, he tells his friend Ogden, had actually made love to him, which, he says, made him feel foolish enough. His letters, after leaving Dr. Bellamy and theology, contain very frequent allusions to 'the girls.' They were evidently, during

the leisure months of 1774, the chief subject of his thoughts, and one of the most frequent objects of his attention.

Now, too, his instinctive love of intrigue began to exhibit itself. A friend of his received a letter from a young female relative, which Burr, for a joke, offered to answer, and did answer, in the name of his friend. He carried on a correspondence with the girl in this way, but, as he told Ogden, avoided scrupulously to draw from her any thing she would choose he should not know. "I would suffer crucifixion," he said, "rather than be guilty of such unparalleled meanness." A horror of meanness is frequently expressed in Burr's early letters. "My idea of a devil," he once observed, "is composed more of malice than of meanness." There are hints of other intrigues with fair ladies in these joyous letters, but so vaguely expressed as to convey no information to the reader.

The impression left on the mind of any candid reader of Burr's correspondence at this period, is favorable to him. A gay, handsome, innocent, honorable, rollicking young man, high-spirited, fond of the girls, an enthusiastic friend, an intelligent reader, and an independent thinker. Every body liked him, and many predicted his future eminence. Of his own immediate circle of friends, he was the youngest, but it is evident that they all unconsciously regarded him as a kind of chief. They speak of his generous heart, and his excellent judgment, and betray in all their letters to him a friendship of the warmest character.

As the winter of 1774 drew on, these happy young men were drawn from the light pursuits proper to their age by the portentous aspect now assumed by the quarrel between the colonies and the mother country. New England was alive with excitement. Her younger spirits, so far from fearing, had begun to desire a conflict with the royal troops. Burr and his set had been ardent Whigs from the beginning of the dispute. They had studied the subject together, and Burr, in particular, had made himself master of the law of the case, and renewed with enthusiasm the military studies which had always interested him. As early as August, 1774, we find him eager for the fray. A mob had torn down the house of a man

suspected of being unfriendly to the liberties of the people, and the sheriff, who had arrested eight of the ringleaders, brought them to Litchfield, where Burr was. The next day, fifty horsemen, each armed with a white club, marched into Litchfield to rescue the prisoners, and Burr sallied forth to join in the threatened contest. But, to his boundless disgust, the horsemen could not be induced to make the attempt, and to crown the infamy of the occasion, he says, "the above mentioned *sneaks* all gave bonds for their appearance to stand a trial at the next court for committing a riot." From the manner in which Burr narrates this incident, it is certain that he was ready for the great fight, eight months before the first blood was shed.

In those months, he began the study of the law under Mr. Tappan Reeve, at Litchfield, and had made some slight progress therein when the news of LEXINGTON, the news that *blood* had been shed, electrified the thirteen colonies, and summoned to arms their gallant spirits of every degree.

CHAPTER V.

THE VOLUNTEER.

His Qualifications as a Soldier — Joins the Army Around Boston — Arnold's Expedition to Quebec — Burr's Secret Mission from Arnold to Montgomery — Appointed aid to General Montgomery — The Assault upon Quebec — Captain Burr bears off the Body of his General — Appointed Aid to General Washington — Reasons of his Discontent in that Situation.

As one who had been waiting for the signal, this young student-at-law threw aside his books, and seized the sword, on fire to join the patriot forces gathered around glorious Boston.

He felt that he was formed to excel as a soldier. A mere stripling in appearance, with a stature of five feet six inches, a slender form, and a youthful face, he yet possessed a power of prolonged exertion, and a capacity for enduring privation, that were wonderful in a youth of nineteen. His courage was perfect—he never knew fear; even his nerves could not be startled by any kind of sudden horror. He was a good horseman, a good helmsman, a tolerable fencer, and a decent shot. Moreover, he loved the military art; knew all of it that could be learned from books, and more highly prized the soldier's glory than that of any other pursuit. To these qualities he added a mind cultivated and most fertile in those suggestions for which the exigencies of war furnish such frequent occasions. And with all his power to win the confiding love of equals and inferiors, men saw in his face and bearing what Kent loved in Lear, *authority!*

No period of Aaron Burr's life is better known than the time he spent in the revolutionary army. Two or three times, in the latter part of his life, he was a claimant under the pension and compensation acts passed for the benefit of the soldiers of the Revolution; and, to substantiate his claim, his fellow-soldiers gave written and sworn testimony respecting his

services, some of them narrating, with great particularity, exploits of his which they had themselves witnessed. Much of this evidence was given by persons well known for their public services, and of veracity beyond question. The number, the coincidence, and the enthusiasm of these depositions, place the essential truth of their statements beyond reasonable doubt. Burr, too, in his old age, loved to talk over those bright years of his youth, and some of the incidents about to be related were derived directly from friends of the old soldier, to whom he used to tell them. He was proud of his military career. What he achieved in law and in politics were as nothing in his eyes in comparison with his deeds as a soldier of the revolutionary army.

On hearing of the battle of Lexington, he wrote immediately to his friend Ogden, urging him to come with all possible rapidity to Litchfield, and they would then together start for the scene of war. But Ogden replied that he could not in such haste make preparations to leave home. Burr wrote again. While Ogden seemed still undecided, came the most thrilling piece of news that breath ever uttered on this continent—the news that a thousand of the flower of the British army had fallen on Bunker Hill under the fire of a band of rustic patriots. Burr could bear inactivity no longer. He mounted his horse, and rode in hot haste to Elizabethtown; there aided Ogden in his preparations for a campaign; and the two friends then made their way to the camp near Boston. They arrived in July, 1775, only a few days after General Washington had taken the command.

The scene presented to the eyes of the commander-in-chief on his arrival at Cambridge has been too often described to require more than an allusion here. In the various camps and posts around the city, there were seventeen thousand half-armed, ill-clad, undisciplined, and unorganized troops, commanded by officers who were either ignorant of their duty, or reluctant to give offense by performing it. The health of the men was endangered by the want of a camp police to enforce the regulations, without which large bodies of men can not exist together. Burr was not prepared for such a scene

of disorder, and still less for the inactivity to which this motley host was condemned. He, and thousands of others, had rushed to the seat of war in the hope that Lexington and Bunker Hill were to be followed up by affairs still more decisive; and this nameless boy, of course, caught no whisper of the dreadful secret, confided only to general officers, that there was not powder enough in the whole army to fight another Bunker Hill, if the occasion should arise. As the youth wandered from camp to camp, he became a prey to disappointment, mortification, and disgust; and, after passing a month of this most wearisome idleness, he actually fretted himself into a kind of intermittent fever, and was confined for several days sick in body and in mind.

One day, as he was tossing in his bed, he overheard Ogden and others talking in the next room of an expedition that was on foot. He called Ogden to his bedside, and asked what expedition it was of which they had been talking. Ogden replied, that Colonel Arnold was about to march with a thousand volunteers through the forests of Maine to attack Quebec, and thus complete the conquest of Canada so gloriously begun by General Montgomery, who was already master of Montreal. Instantly Burr sat up in bed, and declared his determination to join the expedition; and, quietly disregarding Ogden's remonstrances, began, enfeebled as he was, to dress himself. All his friends in the army were aghast at his resolution. But no argument and no persuasion could move him when his mind was made up. Go he would. Under the stimulus of a congenial object, his health improved, and in a very few days he was ready to proceed to the rendezvous at Newburyport, distant thirty miles from Boston. Ogden and others of Burr's acquaintance were conveyed to Newburyport in carriages; but Burr, accompanied by four or five stout fellows whom he had equipped at his own expense, shouldered his knapsack and marched the whole distance.

In the mean time, his Uncle Timothy had heard of his unmanageable ward's intention, and loving the lad none the less for the trouble he had given him, dispatched a messenger, post haste, to bring the fugitive back, peaceably if he could, forcibly

if he must. The messenger conveyed to Burr a letter from his uncle *commanding* his return, and a whole budget of epistles from other friends, setting forth the horror of the contemplated march, and imploring him to give it up. "You will *die*," wrote a young physician of his acquaintance, "I *know* you will die in the undertaking; it is *impossible* for you to endure the fatigue." Upon reading his uncle's peremptory letter, he looked coolly up at the messenger, and said: "Suppose I refuse to go, how do you expect to take me back? If you were to attempt it by force, I would have you hung up in ten minutes." The messenger paused a moment; then gave him a second letter from his uncle, upon opening which Burr discovered a remittance in gold. In this letter his uncle used entreaties only. It was full of the most affectionate and endearing expressions, depicted the inevitable miseries of such a march, and the grief that would afflict his family if he should fall. Burr was moved—his feelings, but not his resolution. Tears filled his eyes as he read this letter, but he could not now retire from a scheme in which his heart, and, as he supposed, his honor, was embarked. He told his uncle so in respectful and tender language, thanking him for the care he had taken of his childhood, and explaining why he could not in this instance comply with his desire. The messenger departed, and the young soldier rushed upon his destiny.

On the 20th of September, the troops, eleven hundred in number, embarked at Newburyport, in eleven transports; and, sailing to the mouth of the Kennebec, found provided for them there, two hundred light batteaux, suitable for ascending the river. In a few days the little army had gone by the last outpost of civilization, and was working its way through a wilderness of which enough still exists to show the adventurous tourist what it must have been before the foot of civilized man had trodden it. It was a wonderful, an unparalleled march; one that American troops, native to the wilderness, alone could have achieved. For thirty-two days they saw no trace of the presence of human beings. Not once or twice merely, but *thirty times, or more*, the boats, with all their contents, ammunition, provisions, and sick men, had to be carried

by main strength, around rapids and falls, over high and precipitous hills, across wide marshes—until, after toil, under which a tenth of the army sank, and from which another tenth ran away, the boats were launched into the Dead river, where a sudden flood dashed to pieces many of the boats, and destroyed one half of the provisions. Then, all the horrors of starvation threatened the devoted band. In a few days more, they were reduced to live upon dogs and reptiles; and, at length, to devour the leather of their shoes and cartridge-boxes, and any thing, however loathsome, which contained the smallest nutriment. It was fifty days after leaving Newburyport, before Arnold, with the loss of exactly half his force, saw the heights of Quebec. He had brought his gallant army six hundred miles through a hideous wilderness.

The student, bred in comparative luxury, who had come from a sick bed to encounter these fatigues and privations, bore them as well as any man of his party. During the first days in the wilderness, the weather was the most delightful of the Indian summer, and Burr, with his friends Ogden, Wilkinson, Samuel Spring (chaplain to the corps), Dearborn, Ward, and others, sped along through the woods, abreast of the boats, merrily enough. Before the rains set in, and the provisions ran low, he had more than regained his wonted vigor; and in the trying time that succeeded, his habit acquired in college, of living upon a very small quantity of food, stood him in good stead. His hardihood and quick helpfulness attracted general admiration among the troops. His skill in the management of a boat was particularly useful in shooting the rapids, and he was often the helmsman of the boat in the van of his division. All his vigilance, however, did not save him, one bitterly cold day, from a sad mishap. He was running some rapids in the Dead river, when he observed the men on shore making violent gestures, but for what purpose, neither he nor his crew could divine. In a few minutes the rapids became swifter, and the boat was precipitated over a fall twenty feet high. One poor fellow was drowned, half the baggage was lost, and Burr himself reached the shore only with the greatest difficulty. In all ways, on this terrible ex

pedition, as his companions for fifty years afterward were at all times delighted to testify, he bore himself like a man, a soldier, and a true comrade. It was very hard to make any man think ill of Aaron Burr who was with him then.

Colonel Arnold, the commander of the expedition, gave him a proof of his confidence by intrusting him with a mission of great difficulty. As the force approached Quebec, it became a matter of the first importance to communicate with General Montgomery at Montreal; particularly as Arnold's diminished numbers might render it impossible for him to act against the place without the general's coöperation. To Burr was confided the task of conveying, alone, one hundred and twenty miles through an enemy's country, a verbal message from Arnold, informing Montgomery of his arrival, and of his plans.

In performing this duty, the young soldier gave the first striking proof of his tact and address. Knowing that the French population had never become reconciled to British rule, and that the Catholic clergy especially abhorred it, he assumed the garb and bearing of a young priest, and went directly to a religious house near the camp, and sought an interview with its chief. Burr's Latin was still fresh in his memory; and as he luckily knew French enough to enable him to pronounce Latin in the French manner, he had little difficulty in conversing with the venerable priest, to whose presence he was conducted. A few minutes sufficed to show the young diplomatist that he had found the man he had need of, and he at once frankly avowed his real character, and asked the aid of the clerical order in the prosecution of his journey. The priest gazed at the stripling with astonishment. He thought him a boy, and told him it was impossible for one of his tender years to perform a journey so long and so beset with danger. Finding that the purpose of the young gentleman was irrevocable, and that he was more of a man than his appearance betokened, he gave him a trusty guide, and one of the rude carriages of the country. From one religious family to another the guide conveyed him in perfect safety, and with such comfort as made the journey seem a holiday excursion compared with the recent

march through the wilderness. Only once was his progress interrupted. At Three Rivers the guide found the people excited by rumors of Arnold's arrival, and the authorities on the alert to prevent communication between the two American commanders. The guide, aware that his neck was in danger, refused to proceed further, and urged Burr to lay by till the excitement had in some degree subsided. Concluding that to be the most prudent course, he was concealed for three days in the convent at Three Rivers; at the expiration of which the guide was willing to go forward. They reached Montreal without further detention or alarm. Burr repaired at once to Montgomery's head-quarters, gave the information with which he was charged, and narrated his adventures. That gallant and princely Irishman was so charmed with Burr's address and daring, that he requested him, on the spot, to accept a place on his staff. A few days after, Burr was formally announced as the general's aid-de-camp, with the rank of captain.

It was now near the end of November, the ground was covered with snow, and the severe Canadian winter had set in with its usual rigor. But Montgomery, without a moment's hesitation, and with only the delay necessary for preparation, put himself at the head of a force of three hundred men, and marched, through a succession of blinding snow storms, to join Arnold's troops who were shivering under the heights of Quebec. Arnold had already made an attempt upon the city, and *might* have carried it and won undying honors, and turned the course of revolutionary history, but for the *treason* of an Indian to whom he had given letters for General Schuyler, but who conveyed them and news of the expedition, to the British commandant!

Soon after Montgomery's arrival, a council of war was held, at which Burr and Ogden were both present, and it was determined to make an attempt to take the place by assault. To Captain Burr, at his own request, was assigned the command of a forlorn hope of forty men, whom he forthwith selected, and began to drill. He caused ladders to be made, and exercised his men in using them, until, burdened with all their

equipments, they could mount the ladders with great agility in the darkest night. During those two weeks of preparation, he was all activity. His soul was in arms. Every night, when all but the sentinels slept, he was under those heights where so much glory has been won, familiarizing his eye with every feature of the scene, and weighing all the obstacles to the ascent. Upon the plan of assault originally proposed, parts of which Burr had himself suggested, and for the execution of which he had made his surveys and preparations, he felt confident of success. But at a late day, that plan, for reasons not certainly known, was changed; a circumstance to which Burr always attributed the disastrous failure of the assault.

The attack, it was agreed at the council of war, should take place at night, and in a snow-storm. By the 20th of December the preparations were complete, and nightly the little army awaited the signal, and the sentinel watched the heavens for signs of the gathering storm. The weather was bitterly cold; the small-pox was making fearful ravages among the troops; there was no hope of an alleviation to their sufferings but in capturing the fortress-crowned heights above them. The last night of the year 1775 had come, and a brilliant moon, when the patriot army retired to rest, was flooding with light the fields of snow, the ice-batteries, the town, and the lofty citadel. No one expected to be aroused that night by the familiar signal. But, at midnight, the heavens became suddenly overcast, and a north-easterly snow-storm, of unusual violence, came driving over the scene. The general was roused. At a glance he saw that the hour had come, and gave the order for the troops to get under arms. Burr assisted in communicating the order to the divisions, and soon had his storming-party in readiness to move. By personal inspection, by the touch of his own hand, he assured himself that the men under his immediate direction were equipped as he had determined they should be on the decisive night. By two o'clock the men had been carefully inspected, and were ready to march to the points whence they were to assault the town. About nine hundred men answered to their names that morning They were divided into four parties, only two

of which were designed to fight; the others were to distract the garrison by feints at places remote from the scene of serious attack. One of the figting-parties was led by Arnold; the other, in spite of the remonstrances of Burr and others of the general's family, was commanded by Montgomery, whose towering form appeared at the head of the column. At four o'clock, the divisions had reached their designated posts. At five the signal of attack was given, and the chilled soldiers, impatient to move, began the ascent through the snow-drifts, and in the teeth of the storm.

Captain Burr marched side by side with his general at the head of the division, as it hurried along the St. Lawrence to the defenses under Cape Diamond. These were well known to the vigilant aid-de-camp. First, the attacking party came upon a row of pickets, which the general, with his own hands, assisted to cut away. Pushing on through the snow and darkness, they reached, a few paces beyond, a second row of pickets, behind which was a square, two-story block-house, loop-holed above for musketry, and pierced below for two twelve-pounders, which, charged with grape, commanded the narrow gorge up which an enemy must advance. It was not till the Americans had begun to remove the second row of pickets, that the British guard became aware of the presence of an enemy. Delivering one ineffectual fire, they fled to the block-house, and communicating their terror to the party within, who were mostly sailors and militia, the whole body fled without once discharging the cannon. But their panic, unfortunately, was not perceived by the Americans, and a delay, short but fatal, occurred. Masses of ice, left on the winter subsidence of the river, obstructed the ascent, and several minutes elapsed before a sufficient number of men could clamber over these and form within the second picket to attack the block-house. In smoothing the pathway, the general himself tugged at the great blocks of ice with furious energy. At length, two hundred men were formed in column. The general was at its head, as before. Burr was at his side. Two other aids, an orderly sergeant, and a French guide, completed the group in advance. "Push on, brave boys, Quebec

is ours," cried Montgomery, as the column began to move up the ascent. On they marched to within forty paces of the block-house. At that moment, a sailor who had fled from his post, surprised that the Americans did not advance, ventured back to discover the reason. Through one of the port-holes of the block-house he saw the advancing party, and turned to run away again; but, as he turned, he performed an act which decided the fortunes of the day, and gave Canada back again to Britain. He touched off one of those grape-charged cannon.

Forward fell the majestic form of Montgomery, never to rise again. Down went two of his aids, mortally wounded. The orderly sergeant, too, never saw daylight again. Every man that marched in front of the column, except Captain Burr and the guide, were struck down to death by the discharge of that twelve-pounder. The day was just dawning, and the soldiers were soon aware of the whole extent of the catastrophe. The column halted and wavered. The command fell into incompetent hands. Priceless minutes were lost in those *consultations* by which cowardice loves to hide its trepidation. At that critical time, when all but the staunchest hearts gave way, Burr was as cool, as determined, as eager to go forward, as at the most exultant moment of the advance. He was vehement, almost to the point of mutiny, in urging a renewal of the attack. "When dismay and consternation universally prevailed," testifies Captain Richard Platt, who commanded a New York company, among the most advanced in the column of attack, "Burr animated the troops, and made many efforts to lead them on, and stimulated them to enter the lower town; and might have succeeded, but for the positive order of the commanding officer for the troops to retreat." There was small need of *order* to that effect. The enemy returned to the block-house, and opened fire on the assailants. The retreat soon became a precipitate and disorderly flight.

It was then that our young aid-de-camp made a noble display of courage and fidelity; improving the opportunity which the brave know how to snatch from the teeth of disaster. There lay the body of his general in its snowy shroud.

Down the steep, over the blocks of ice and drifts of snow, and along the river's bank, his comrades were flying in disgraceful panic. From the block-house, the enemy were beginning to issue in pursuit. The faithful aid, a boy in stature, exerting all his strength, lifted the general's superbly-proportioned body upon his shoulders, and ran with it down the gorge, up to his knees in snow, the enemy only forty paces behind him. Burr's gallantry on this occasion, too, had a witness. Samuel Spring, his college friend, the chaplain to the expeditionary force, was near the head of the assaulting column on this eventful morning, and was one of the last to leave the scene of action. It was his friendly eyes that saw "little Burr," in the snowy dimness of the dawn, hurrying away before the enemy, and staggering under his glorious load. The chances of war separated those two friends there and then. From that hour, for fifty years, the reverend chaplain never saw the face of Aaron Burr. But the picture was indelibly imprinted upon his memory, and he loved the lad for it while his heart beat; and he *would* testify his love, after that lapse of time, when it required some manliness in a clergyman even to accost Aaron Burr, and when Spring's own son, more worldly wise, besought the old clergyman not to see the man who had "*lost caste!*" But to conclude the adventure. "Little Burr" could not long sustain the burden. He reeled along with it till the enemy were close behind him; when, to avoid capture, he was compelled to drop the body in the snow again, and hasten after the flying troops.

Burr's behavior on this decisive day won him great distinction, and laid the foundation of his fortune. His praises were warmly repeated among the troops, with whom he had before been a favorite. His extreme youth, his singular coolness and tact, the éclât attached to his position as a gentleman volunteer, his quick intelligence and courteous manners all conspired to win the regard of those rustic soldiers. Fourteen days after the assault, the news of its failure reached the lower provinces of New England and struck dismay to the heart of the most hopeful. But the brilliant deeds of valor which had marked the whole course of the expedition were a consolation

to the struggling patriots, who listened with greedy ears to the wondrous story; and while the headlong courage and indomitable perseverance of Arnold, the chivalric gallantry of Montgomery, the desperate bravery of Morgan, all had their due of praise and reward, the romantic exploits of the boy aid-de-camp who bore his general's body from the enemy's fire were not forgotten. Ogden, soon after the action, went home with dispatches, and told his friends, told Congress, told General Washington, of "little Burr's" bravery; and back to Quebec came a budget of congratulatory letters. It is pleasant to see how glad and proud Burr's young friends were that he had won distinction. His sister, who had passed many weeks of agonizing suspense without any news of him whatever, hearing now, at once, of his safety and his glory, was in ecstacies of pride and delight.

The American forces remained about Quebec till the spring annoying the garrison as best they could, and not without hope of starving it into a surrender. Arnold, who had been wounded in the assault, was again the officer in command, and appointed Burr to the post of brigade-major. Burr, however, was not an admirer of the turbulent and daring apothecary. Arnold had an absurd idea of taunting and defying the enemy by parading the troops in sight of the fortress, and by sending letters demanding its surrender, practices most repugnant to the practical mind of Burr. A letter of this description Arnold desired Major Burr to convey to the British commander. He demanded to know its contents, and upon Arnold's objecting, offered to resign his post, but refused, point-blank, to carry a letter of which he knew not the purport. Arnold then showed him the letter, which demanded a surrender of the fortress, and was couched in what Burr deemed most arrogant and insulting language. He still declined to be the bearer of such a missive, and predicted that whoever should deliver it would meet only with contempt and derision. Arnold sent it by another officer, who was treated precisely as Burr had anticipated.

In the spring, the Americans had to retreat before the new army under Burgoyne. They remained a short time at Mont-

real, where Burr's dislike to Arnold increased to such a degree that he determined to leave him and seek more active service nearer home. Even on the march through the wilderness, he thought Arnold had not shared the privations of the troops as he ought; and now, when the resources of a town were at his command, Burr was thoroughly disgusted with the general's all-exacting meanness. "Arnold," Burr used to say, "is a perfect madman in the excitements of battle, and is ready for any deeds of valor; but he has not a particle of moral courage. He is utterly unprincipled, and has no love of country or self-respect to guide him. He is not to be trusted anywhere but under the eye of a superior."

On reaching the river Sorel, Major Burr informed Arnold of his determination to leave. Arnold, not in the best humor, objected. With the utmost suavity of manner, Burr said,

"Sir, I have a boat in readiness; I have employed four discharged soldiers to row me, and I start from such a point (naming it) at six o'clock to-morrow morning."

Whereupon Arnold angrily forbade his departure, and Burr, in the blandest tone, reiterated his determination. In the morning, as the young soldier was about to step into his boat, he saw Arnold approaching.

"Why, Major Burr, you are not going?" said he.

"I am, sir," was the reply.

"But," said Arnold, "you know it is against my orders."

"I know," rejoined Burr, "that you have the *power* to stop me, but nothing short of force shall do it."

Upon this, Arnold changed his tone, and tried to persuade his efficient brigade-major to remain. In a few minutes, Burr stepped into his boat, wished the general good-by and good fortune, and was rowed away without hinderance. As a *volunteer*, who had remained with the corps as long as there was danger to be faced or fatigue to be undergone, Burr, disciplinarian as he was, felt that he had a right to leave. Arnold's unwillingness to let him go arose from the fact that a competent brigade-major relieves a general from all the details of command; as much so as a good mate the captain of a ship To a man of Arnold's self-indulgent habits, an officer like

Burr, of sleepless vigilance, and of activity that nothing could tire, was a most important acquisition.

On the Sorel, an incident occurred which frightened Burr's oarsmen, and still more a young trader with whom he shared the boat. As the boat rounded a point, there suddenly came into view a large brick house, with loopholes for the discharge of musketry, and an Indian warrior, in full costume, standing at the door. The crew were for instant retreat, but Burr seeing that they were already far within rifle-shot, ordered them to go on. At this, the passenger, in a rage of terror, attempted to prevent the soldiers from rowing; but Burr, drawing a pistol, declared he would shoot him if he interfered, and directed the men to row straight toward the portentous edifice.

"I will go up to the house," he added, "and we shall soon learn who they are."

Before the boat reached the land, the Indians came swarming from the house, and presented an appearance as alarming as picturesque. Burr sprang ashore, walked toward them, and soon had the pleasure of learning that they were peacefully disposed. In a few minutes he caused to be brought on shore a keg of whisky, which put the Indians into the highest good humor, and they parted excellent friends.

On reaching Albany, Burr learned that his services in Canada had greatly pleased the commander-in-chief. Upon Ogden's visit to Philadelphia with dispatches, he had been informed by Mr. Reed that there was a vacancy on the staff of General Washington, to which he should be glad to recommend him. Ogden replied, that he preferred more active service, and proceeded to use all his eloquence and interest in procuring the staff appointment for his friend Burr. To General Washington himself he extolled Burr's gallantry and talent with all the warmth of the most devoted friendship, and he soon had the delight of conveying to his friend a message from the general.

"General Washington," he wrote, "desires me to inform you that he will provide for you, and that he expects you will come to him immediately, and stay in his family. You will

now want your horse," added Ogden; "I have sold him, and spent the money," etc.

The letter, of which this is a part, passed Burr on his way to New York; it was from other friends that he first heard of General Washington's invitation. So long a period had elapsed since he had heard from Ogden, that he began to think that gentleman must have forgotten, amid the multitude of his new friends, the companion, the brother, of his youth. And while Ogden was exulting at the success of his friendly endeavors, Burr was lamenting his apparent faithlessness and neglect. He wrote him a letter, upbraiding him in terms amusing for their young-manish severity and loftiness. He dealt *Romanly* with him.

"There is in *man*," said Burr, "a certain love of novelty; a fondness of variety (useful within proper limits), which influences more or less in almost every act of life. New views, new laws, new *friends*, have each their charm. Truly great must be the soul, and firm almost beyond the weakness of humanity, that can withstand the smiles of fortune. Success, promotion, the caresses of the great, and the flatteries of the low, are sometimes fatal to the noblest minds. The volatile become an easy prey. The fickle heart, tiptoe with joy, as from an eminence, views with contempt its former joys, connections, and pursuits. A new taste contracted, seeks companions suited to itself. But pleasures easiest tasted, though perhaps at first of higher glee, are soonest past, and, the more they are relied upon, leave the severer sting behind. One cloudy day despoils the glow-worm of all its glitter. Should fortune ever frown upon you, Matt.; should those you now call friends forsake you; should the clouds gather force on every side, and threaten to burst upon you, think then upon the man who never betrayed you; rely on the sincerity you never found to fail; and if my heart, my life, and my fortune can assist you, it is yours."

Upon the receipt of Ogden's letter, Burr saw his error, and all was well again between the two friends. Ogden, indeed, loved Aaron Burr with an unusual affection. In the very letter which told Burr of General Washington's favor,

Ogden mentioned that he had recently gone out of his way in the hope of meeting him, and declared that his failure to do so was the greatest disappointment he had ever experienced.

In May, 1776, Major Burr reported himself in New York to General Washington, who at once invited him to reside in his family until a suitable appointment could be procured for him. The commander-in-chief was residing at Richmond Hill, then about two miles from the city, on the banks of the Hudson, in a mansion which was afterward Burr's own country seat. It was a delightful abode, say the old chroniclers; the grounds extending down to the river, and the neighborhood adorned with groves, gardens, ponds, and villas.*

Burr, with alacrity, accepted General Washington's invitation, and went immediately to reside at head-quarters. For about six weeks, he sat at the general's table, occasionally rode out with him, and performed some of the duties of aid-de-camp. Long before the expiration of even that short period, he became so disgusted with his situation, that in one of his letters to Governor Hancock, his own and his father's friend, he talked seriously of retiring from the service. Hancock dissuaded him, and offered to procure him the appointment of aid to General Putnam, then quartered in the city. Burr consented, and in July took up his abode with Putnam at the corner of Broadway and the Battery, where also Mrs. Putnam lived and kept her daughters busy spinning flax to help supply the soldiers with shirts. In this homely, noble scene, Burr was perfectly contented; and as aid to the general employed in fortifying the city, he found the active employment he had desired. "My good old general," he was wont to style the soft-hearted, tough, indomitable wolf-killer.

Of the minor events of Burr's life, none contributed more

* The site of the old mansion is now the corner of Charlton and Varick streets. Twenty years ago, a part of the house was still standing, and served as a low drinking shop. The vicinity, so enchanting in Burr's day, presents at this time a dreary scene of shabby ungentility, as passengers by the Sixth Avenue cars have an opportunity of observing.

to the odium which finally gathered round his name than this abrupt departure from the family of General Washington. It often happens, in the case of men respecting whom the public verdict is, upon the whole, not unjust, that many of the *specifications* in the charge against them are unfounded. Good men, too, are praised for more virtues than they possess. Now, nothing could have been more natural, or more proper, than Burr's discontent as a member of Washington's family. The nature of the duties that devolved upon the general's aides during the whole of the war, is well known. Washington, with the affairs of a continent upon his shoulders, was burdened with a prodigious correspondence. The enemy was the *least* of his perplexities. In managing and advising Congress, in getting the army organized, in stirring up the zeal of the governors and legislatures of the States, in reconciling the perpetual disputes about rank, his time and mind were chiefly employed. His aides, no less than his secretary, were often confined to the desk more hours a day than bank clerks. Burr was the most active of human beings. He had just come from an expedition which had tasked all his powers, and given him the taste of glory. He was in the midst of a scene calculated to arouse the most sluggish. Staten Island was dotted all over with the tents of the enemy, and the bay was whitened with the sails of the most imposing fleet these shores had ever beheld. The patriot force was straining every nerve to prepare the city for the expected landing of the enemy. Ogden, now lieutenant-colonel, with his regiment of Jerseymen, was in active service, and told Burr he was going to do honor to their native State. The townspeople were in dreadful alarm. When the British saluted an arriving ship, or when a sloop ran past General Putnam's batteries, cannonading as she went, women and children, as Washington himself records, ran shrieking into the streets, in terror of a bombardment. Everywhere were seen the sights, and heard the sounds, that appal the citizen and animate the soldier. It was in such circumstances, that Burr, the electric Burr, the born soldier, the most irrepressible of mortals, found himself sinking into the condition of a *clerk!* The situation was intolerable to him; as it was, after-

ward to Hamilton,* who liked the post of General Washington's aid little better than Burr did.

Hamilton, however, learned, as he grew older, to value correctly the character of the commander-in-chief, and the immeasurable services which his caution and perseverance had rendered to his country and to man. Burr never did. The prejudices against the general, imbibed during his short residence with him at Richmond Hill, were strengthened by subsequent events into a settled dislike, which he carried with him through life. He thought George Washington was a bad general, and an honest, weak man. He said he knew nothing

* Hamilton, in a letter to General Schuyler, dated February 18th, 1781, gives the following account of his break with General Washington: "Two days ago, the general and I passed each other on the stairs; he told me he wanted to speak with me; I answered that I would wait upon him immediatel. I went below and delivered Mr. Tilghman a letter to be sent to the commissary, containing an order of a pressing and interesting nature. Returning to the general, I was stopped on the way by the Marquis de la Fayette, and we conversed together, about a minute, on a matter of business. He can testify how impatient I was to get back, and that I left him in a manner which, but for our intimacy, would have been more than abrupt. Instead of finding the general, as is usual, in his room, I met him at the head of the stairs, where, accosting me in an angry voice, 'Colonel Hamilton,' said he, 'you have kept me waiting at the head of the stairs these ten minutes; I must tell you, sir, you treat me with disrespect.' I replied, without petulancy, but with decision, 'I am not conscious of it, sir, but since you have thought it necessary to tell me so, we part.' 'Very well, sir,' said he, 'if it be your choice,' or something to that effect, and we separated. I sincerely believe my absence, which gave so much umbrage, did not last two minutes. In less than an hour after, Mr. Tilghman came to me, in the general's name, assuring me of his confidence in my ability, integrity, usefulness, etc., and of his desire, in a candid conversation, to heal a difference which could not have happened but in a moment of passion. I requested Mr. Tilghman to tell him, first, that I had taken my resolution in a manner not to be revoked," etc., etc.

Hamilton proceeds to say that he had long been discontented with the situation of aid, and had previously determined that if he *ever did* have a difference with General Washington, it should be final. He then adds: "The general is a very honest man; his competitors have slender abilities and less integrity. His popularity has often been essential to the safety of America, and is still of great importance to it. These considerations have influenced my past conduct respecting him, and will influence my future: I think it necessary he should be supported."

of scientific warfare, and could therefore give no instruction of any value to a young soldier burning to excel in his profession. He thought the general was as fond of adulation as he was known to be sensitive to censure, and that no officer could stand well with him who did not play the part of his worshiper. He could not bear near his person, said Burr, a man of an independent habit of mind. Washington's want of book-culture, too, would naturally surprise a youth who was born and reared amid books, and who was, to the last, an eager reader. In a word, Burr saw in this wise, illustrious man, only the thrifty planter, and the country gentleman; a good soldier enough in Indian warfare, but quite at fault in the presence of a civilized enemy.

The general, on his part, seems to have conceived an ill impression of Burr, but not the serious distrust of after years, when Burr was his political opponent. Burr always asserted that it was *not* an amour, nor any thing of that nature, but his independent manner of enforcing opinions, to which time added the sting of proved correctness, that made General Washington his enemy. Burr, for example, was one of a considerable number of officers who thought that New York could not be held, and that to burn and abandon it was the best way to frustrate the British commander. No doubt the old young-man expressed this opinion with a confidence to which his age and his dimensions gave him no apparent title. But, at twenty, "little Burr" had been a man for some years; at least in confidence in his own abilities.

In one word, there was an antipathy between the two men each lacking qualities which the other highly prized; each possessing virtues which by the other were not admired.

CHAPTER VI.

AID-DE-CAMP TO GENERAL PUTNAM.

THE RETREAT FROM LONG ISLAND — BURR SAVES A BRIGADE — HIS AFFAIR WITH MISS MONCRIEFFE — HER NARRATIVE.

IT was the fortune of Major Burr, while serving as aid to General Putnam, to save a frightened brigade, and to win a virgin heart.

During the disastrous days upon Long Island which preceded the famous retreat of the American army, General Putnam was in command, and his aid-de-camp was in the thick of events. To reach the scene of action, and to begin an accurate survey of it, were simultaneous occurrences with that intelligent young soldier. He rode about the American camp, and visited every post and out-post. He informed himself of the positions and strength of the enemy. He discovered that the American troops had as yet no idea of standing against the British in open fight; that Bunker Hill was still their ideal of a battle, and breast-works their only reliance. His report to the general was unfavorable in the extreme, and he was more decided than ever in the opinion that General Washington's true plan was, by retreating from the coast, to draw the British army away from their ships, which were an immense support to them, both morally and otherwise. He was utterly opposed to a general action, for the reason that a large proportion of the new troops, he was certain, would not stand more than one volley. When the American army crossed the East river, in the presence of the enemy, he was engaged during the whole night on the Brooklyn side, where his coolness and activity made a lasting impression upon the mind of General McDougal, who superintended the embarkation. In later campaigns, Burr served under that general, who showed

how he valued Burr's soldierly qualities by the use he made of them.

But it was on that eventful Sunday, September the 15th, 1776, when the British landed on Manhattan island, and the American army fled before them to Harlem, that Major Burr most distinguished himself. He was in the rear of the retreating troops; as was also Captain Alexander Hamilton, with his company of New York artillery. Hamilton lost all his baggage and one gun that afternoon, but conducted his men gallantly and safely away. As Major Burr, with two horsemen, was riding toward Richmond Hill, on his way to Harlem, he came upon a small sod-fort, called Bunker's Hill, nearly on the line of what is now Grand-street. To his astonishment he found that a great part of an American brigade, left in the city by one of the numberless mistakes inevitable on such a day, had taken refuge in this structure.

The British, it must be remembered, landed on the East river side of the island, nearly four miles above the Battery, with the intention to cut off the retreat of the Americans, and General Knox, who commanded this brigade, supposed that the enemy were already masters of the island, and that escape by flight was impossible. Major Burr rode up to the fort and asked who commanded there. General Knox presenting himself, Burr inquired what he was doing *there*, and why he did not retreat. The general replied that the enemy were already across the island, and that he meant to defend the fort. Burr ridiculed the idea of defending a place which was not bomb-proof, and which contained neither water nor provisions. With one howitzer, he exclaimed, the enemy will knock it to pieces in four hours. He maintained that there was no chance but retreat, and urged the general to lead out his men. Knox declared it would be madness to attempt it, and refused to stir. While this debate was waxing warm, the officers of the brigade gathered round, eager to hear what was said. To them Burr addressed himself with the vehemence demanded by the occasion. He told them that if they remained where they were they would all be prisoners before night, or hung like dogs. He said it was better for half the corps to fall

fighting its way through the enemy's lines, than for all to be taken and rot in a dungeon. He added that he knew the roads of the island perfectly, and would lead them safely to the main body of the army, if they would place themselves under his direction. The men agreed to follow him, and they marched out, Burr riding in advance, on the side where an attack was to be feared, and returning at intervals to reassure the terrified troops. When they had gone two miles on their way, firing was suddenly heard at the right. Shouting to his men to follow him, Burr galloped directly to the spot whence the firing had issued, and soon discovered that it was a small advance-guard of the enemy, consisting of a single company, who, on seeing the Americans, fired and fled. Burr and his two horsemen rode furiously after them, and killed several of the fugitives. Galloping back, he found the troops had taken a wrong road, and were in sore trepidation. He guided them now through a wood, riding from front to rear, and from rear to front, encouraging them by his words, and still more by his cool, intrepid demeanor. With the loss of a few stragglers, for the march was of the swiftest, he led the brigade to the main body. He was ever after regarded by those troops as their deliverer from British prison-ships.

This brilliant feat of the young aid-de-camp became the talk of the army. Soon after, on the surrender of Fort Washington, another brigade was, by a similar accident, left behind; and of 2500 men that fell into the hands of the enemy, not 500 survived the treatment they received as prisoners. Applauded by his comrades, Burr was not mentioned in the dispatches of the commander-in-chief; which, then and always, he regarded as an intentional slight.

For a short period after the retreat, he was comparatively at leisure Among his letters, there is one written at this time from Kingsbridge to Mrs. Timothy Edwards, the aunt who had been to him all of a mother that any but a mother can be to a child. She had written to him in great alarm, on hearing of the abandonment of New York. His reply, so modest, so tenderly respectful, so sensible, would alone make it difficult to believe that at this time Aaron Burr was a bad

man, whatever he may afterward have become. He tells his aunt it had always been a thing conceded, that the sea-ports of America were at the discretion of the tyrant of Great Britain; and that it was a great gain for the American army to be in a position where, to attack them, the British must leave the immediate support of their ships. Besides, the loss of the city was rousing the country from lethargy; more effectual measures than ever were in contemplation to increase the army; and a committee of Congress was then in camp to concert those measures with the commander-in-chief. "I do not intend by this, my dear aunt," he continues, "to deceive you into an opinion that every thing is already entirely secure;" but "I hope, madam, you will continue, with your usual philosophy and resolution, prepared for the uncertain events of war, not anticipating improbable calamities." And as to the horrible stories in circulation about the barbarities of the Hessians, "most of them are incredible and false; they are fonder of plunder than blood, and are more the engines than the authors of cruelty." And so he proceeds to calm the apprehensions of the good lady, writing her a letter which she would be proud to hand round the village, and which would encourage and stimulate the friends of the cause. His own exploits during the late battles and retreats he does not allude to.

At Kingsbridge, about the date of this letter, Burr was engaged in an adventure little in harmony with the warlike scenes around him.

The breaking out of the revolutionary war found a number of British officers domesticated among the colonists, and connected with them by marriage. In New York and the other garrisoned towns, officers of the army led society, as military men still do in every garrisoned town in the world. When hostilities began, and every man was ordered to his post, some of these officers left their families residing among the people; and it happened, in a few instances, that the events of war carried a father far away from his wife and children, never to rejoin them. The future Scott of America will know how to make all this very familiar to the American people

by the romantic and pathetic fictions which it will suggest to him.

Margaret Moncrieffe, a girl of fourteen, but a woman in development and appetite, witty, vivacious, piquant and beautiful, had been left at Elizabethtown, in New Jersey, by her father, Major Moncrieffe, who was then with his regiment on Staten Island, and of course cut off from communication with his daughter. Destitute of resources, and anxious to rejoin her father, she wrote to General Putnam for his advice and assistance. General Putnam received her letter in New York about the time that Major Burr joined him, and his reply was prepared for his signature by the hand of his new aid-de-camp. The good old general declared in this letter that he was her father's enemy, indeed, as an officer, but as a man, his friend, and ready to do any good office for him or his. He invited her to come and reside in his family until arrangements could be made for sending her to Staten Island. She consented, an officer was sent to conduct her to the city, and she was at once established in General Putnam's house. There she met, and became intimate with Major Burr.

What followed from their intimacy has been stated variously by those who have written of it. Mr. Davis more than insinuates, nay, more than asserts, that Miss Moncrieffe was seduced by Burr, and that to him is to be attributed her subsequent career of sorrow and shame. In support of this accusation, he quotes from her autobiography, published after she had been the mistress of half a dozen of the notables of London, certain passages which, taken by themselves, do certainly corroborate the charge. Great indeed was my astonishment on recurring to the work itself (Memoirs of Mrs. Coghlan) to find that her narrative, read in connection, not only affords no support to Mr. Davis's insinuations, but explicitly, and twice, contradicts them. As a reply to Mr. Davis's garbled extracts, here follows the entire passage relating to her connection with the American army. It is known and conceded that the young officer whom she extols in such passionate language, and whom she miscalls 'colonel,' was Major Burr. Thus writes Mrs. Coghlan, *née* Moncrieffe:

"When I arrived in Broadway (a street so called), where General Putnam resided, I was received with great tenderness, both by Mrs. Putnam and her daughters, and on the following day I was introduced by them to General and Mrs. Washington, who likewise made it their study to show me every mark of regard; but I seldom was allowed to be alone, although sometimes, indeed, I found an opportunity to escape to the gallery on the top of the house, where my chief delight was to view, with a telescope, our fleet and army on Staten Island. My amusements were few; the good Mrs. Putnam employed me and her daughters constantly to spin flax for shirts for the American soldiers; indolence, in America, being totally discouraged; and I likewise worked for General Putnam, who, though not an accomplished *muscadin*, like our dilletantis of St. James's-street, was certainly one of the best characters in the world; his heart being composed of those noble materials which equally command respect and admiration.

"One day, after dinner, the *Congress* was the toast; General Washington viewed me very attentively, and sarcastically said, 'Miss Moncrieffe, you don't drink your wine.' Embarrassed by this reproof, I knew not how to act; at last, as if by a secret impulse, I addressed myself to the 'American Commander,' and taking the wine, I said, 'General Howe is the toast.' Vexed at my temerity, the whole company, especially General Washington, censured me; when my good friend, General Putnam, as usual, apologized, and assured them I did not mean to offend. 'Besides,' replied he, 'every thing said or done by such a child ought rather to amuse than affront you.' General Washington, piqued at this observation, then said, 'Well, miss, I will overlook your indiscretion, on condition that you drink my health, or General Putnam's, the first time you dine at Sir William Howe's table, on the other side of the water.'

"These words conveyed to me a flattering hope that I should once more see my father, and I promised General Washington to do any thing which he desired, provided he would permit me to return to him.

"Not long after this circumstance, a flag of truce arrived from Staten Island, with letters from Major Moncrieffe, demanding me, for they now considered me as a prisoner. General Washington would not acquiesce in this demand, saying 'that I should remain a hostage for my father's good behavior.' I must here observe, that when General Washington refused to deliver me up, the noble-minded Putnam, as if it were by instinct, laid his hand on his sword, and, with a violent oath, swore 'that my father's request *should* be granted.' The commander-in-chief, whose influence governed the Congress, soon prevailed on them to consider me as a person whose situation required their strict attention; and, that I might not escape, they ordered me to Kingsbridge, where, in justice, I must say, that I was treated with the utmost tenderness. General Mifflin there commanded. His lady was a most accomplished, beautiful woman, a Quaker. And here my heart received its first impression—an impression that, amid the subsequent shocks which it has received, has never been effaced, and which rendered me very unfit to admit the embraces of an unfeeling, brutish husband.

"O, may these pages one day meet the eye of him who subdued my virgin heart, whom the immutable, unerring laws of nature had pointed out for my husband, but whose sacred decree the barbarous customs of society fatally violated. To him I plighted my virgin vow, and I shall never cease to lament that obedience to a father left it incomplete. When I reflect on my past sufferings, now that, alas! my present sorrows press heavily upon me, I can not refrain from expatiating a little on the inevitable horrors which ever attend the frustration of natural affections: I myself, who, unpitied by the world, have endured every calamity that human nature knows, am a melancholy example of this truth; for if I know my own heart, it is far better calculated for the purer joys of domestic life, than for the hurricane of extravagance and dissipation in which I have been wrecked.

"Why is the will of nature so often perverted? Why is social happiness for ever sacrificed at the altar of prejudice? Avarice has usurped the throne of reason, and the affections

of the heart are not consulted. We can not command our desires, and when the object of our being is unattained, misery must be necessarily our doom. Let this truth, therefore, be for ever remembered: when once an affection has rooted itself in a tender, constant heart, no time, no circumstance can eradicate it. Unfortunate, then, are they who are joined, if their hearts are not matched!

"With this conqueror of my soul, how happy should I now have been! What storms and tempests should I have avoided (at least I am pleased to think so) if I had been allowed to follow the bent of my inclinations! and happier, O, ten thousand times happier should I have been with him, in the wildest desert of our native country, the woods affording us our only shelter, and their fruits our only repast, than under the canopy of costly state, with all the refinements and embellishments of courts, with the royal warrior who would fain have proved himself the conqueror of France.

"My conqueror was engaged in another cause, he was ambitious to obtain other laurels: he fought to liberate, not to enslave nations. He was a colonel in the American army, and high in the estimation of his country: his victories were never accompanied with one gloomy, relenting thought; they shone as bright as the cause which achieved them! I had communicated by letter to General Putnam the proposals of this gentleman, with my determination to accept them, and I was embarrassed by the answer which the general returned; he entreated me to remember that the person in question, from his political principles, was extremely obnoxious to my father, and concluded by observing, 'that I surely must not unite myself with a man who would not hesitate to drench his sword in the blood of my nearest relation, should he be opposed to him in battle.' Saying this, he lamented the necessity of giving advice contrary to his own sentiments, since in every other respect he considered the match as unexceptionable. Nevertheless, General Putnam, after this discovery, appeared, in all his visits to Kingsbridge, extremely reserved: his eyes were constantly fixed on me; nor did he ever cease to make me the object of his concern to Congress; and, at

various applications, he succeeded in obtaining leave for my departure; when, in order that I should go to Staten Island with the respect due to my sex and family, the barge belonging to the Continental Congress was ordered, with twelve oars, and a general officer, together with his suite, was dispatched to see me safe across the bay of New York. The day was so very tempestuous, that I was half drowned with the waves dashing against me. When we came within hail of the *Eagle* man-of-war, which was Lord Howe's ship, a flag of truce was sent to meet us: the officer dispatched on this occasion was Lieutenant Brown. General Knox told him that he had orders to see me safe to head-quarters. Lieutenant Brown replied, 'It was impossible, as no person from the enemy could approach nearer the English fleet;' but added, 'that if I would place myself under his protection, he certainly would attend me thither.' I then entered the barge, and bidding an eternal farewell to my dear American friends, turned MY BACK ON LIBERTY.

"We first rowed alongside the *Eagle*, and Mr. Brown afterward conveyed me to head-quarters. When my name was announced, the British commander-in-chief sent Colonel Sheriff (lately made a general, and who, during my father's life-time, was one of his most particular friends; although, alas! the endearing sentiment of friendship now seems extinct in his breast, as far as the unhappy daughter is concerned) with an invitation from Sir William Howe to dinner, which was necessarily accepted. When introduced, I can not describe the emotion I felt; so sudden the transition in a few hours, that I was ready to sink into earth! Judge the distress of a girl not fourteen, obliged to encounter the curious, inquisitive eyes of at least forty or fifty people who were at dinner with the general. Fatigued with their fastidious compliments, I could only hear the buzz among them, saying, 'She is a sweet girl, she is divinely handsome;' although it was some relief to be placed at table next to the wife of Major Montresor, who had known me from my infancy. Owing to this circumstance, I recovered a degree of confidence; but being unfortunately asked, agreeably to military etiquette, for a toast, I gave

'General Putnam.' Colonel Sheriff said, in a low voice, 'You must not give him here;' when Sir William Howe complaisantly replied, 'O! by all means; if he be the lady's sweet heart, I can have no objection to drink his health.' This involved me in a new dilemma; I wished myself a thousand miles distant, and, to divert the attention of the company, I gave to the general a letter that I had been commissioned to deliver from General Putnam, of which the following is a copy. (And here I consider myself bound to apologize for the bad spelling of my most excellent republican friend. The bad orthography was amply compensated by the magnanimity of the man who wrote it):

"'*Ginrale* Putnam's compliments to Major Moncrieffe, has made him a present of a fine daughter, if he don't *lick* her he must send her back again, and he will previde her with a good *twig* husband.'

"The substitution of *twig* for *whig* husband, served as a fund of entertainment to the whole company."

She proceeds to record the history of her marriage with Mr. Coghlan, who, she says, drove her into the arms of a paramour by the brutality of his conduct. She asserts that she had led a strictly virtuous life until, after being forced into a marriage with a man she loathed, she was subjected by him to harsh and cruel treatment. The statements of a woman notorious for her vices can not, of course, be regarded as evidence; yet it seemed just to the memory of Burr for the reader to be informed that the story of her seduction by him has no corroboration in her own narrative. The man has enough to answer for without having the ruin of this girl of fourteen laid to his charge. Her story, it must be admitted, is not very probable. Burr was, to a considerable extent, his general's general; and if he had really loved Miss Moncrieffe and she him, and each had desired marriage, I think that General Putnam could have been easily dissuaded from making any serious opposition to it.

Perhaps, if the young lady had known who it was that caused her removal from the city, she might not have been so easily captivated. According to a story told by the late

Colonel W. L. Stone (author of the Life of Brant), it was no other than Burr himself. Before her arrival at General Putnam's, it appears that Burr, though he was delighted with her wit and vivacity, conceived the idea that she might be a British spy; and as he was looking over her shoulder one day, while she was painting a bouquet, the suspicion darted into his mind that she was using the "language of flowers" for the purpose of conveying intelligence to the enemy. He communicated his suspicion to General Washington, who thought it only prudent to remove her a few miles further inland, to the quarters of General Mifflin; where, after the evacuation of the city, Burr met her again, and, as she says, won her virgin affections. Colonel Stone was very intimate with Burr in his latter years, and had long conversations with him about revolutionary times. He may have derived this pretty tale from Burr himself.

CHAPTER VII.

HE COMMANDS A REGIMENT.

Appointed a Lieutenant-Colonel — Commands a Regiment — Captures a British Picket — Forms an Acquaintance with Mrs. Theodosia Prevost — Commands a Brigade at the Battle of Monmouth — Anecdote.

Major Burr continued to serve as General Putnam's aid for ten months after the retreat from New York, and bore his part in the toils and dangers of that dismal period. In the spring of 1777 a new army was to be raised, but he had no hopes of a regimental appointment in it. In March, he wrote to his friend Ogden that he had not the least expectation of promotion either in the line or on the staff, but as he was "very happy in the esteem and entire confidence of his good old general," he should be piqued at no neglect, unless particularly pointed, or where silence would be want of spirit. It was true, he said, his equals and even inferiors in rank had left him; and assurances from those in power he had had, unasked, in abundance; but of those he should never remind them. We were not to be the judges of our own merit, and he was content to contribute his mite in any station. From this language we may infer that he thought himself an ill-used aid-de-camp.

In July, 1777, while at Peekskill with General Putnam, he was notified by General Washington of his promotion to the rank of lieutenant-colonel. He was one of the youngest who held that rank in the revolutionary army, or who has ever held it in an army of the United States; yet he thought the promotion unjustly tardy. In his letter of acknowledgment to the commander-in-chief, he said he was truly sensible of the honor done him, and should be studious to comport himself in

his new rank so as to secure his general's esteem ; yet he was constrained to observe that the late date of his appointment subjected him to the command of some officers who were his juniors last campaign ; and he should like, with submission, to know whether it was misconduct in him, or extraordinary merit in them, which had given them the preference. He wanted, he continued, to avoid equally the character of turbulent or passive, but as a decent regard to rank was proper and necessary, he hoped the concern he felt was excusable in one who regarded his honor next to the welfare of his country. The general's reply to this letter has not been preserved.

With the rank of lieutenant-colonel, Burr soon found himself the sole commander of his regiment, his colonel not being a fighting man.

To the strength of the patriot cause, every interest of the country had to contribute its quota ; rich men, money ; influential men, weight and respectability ; efficient men, practical help. Many were, therefore, appointed to high posts in the army because they were persons of importance in civil life ; they gave their *names* to the cause. Among the reasons which made Washington the most complete exemplification of "*the right man for the right place*," that history exhibits, one was that he was a great Virginia gentleman, who had vast plantations, hundreds of slaves, a fine mansion, and rode about in a chariot and six. "One of the finest fortunes in America," John Adams exultingly exclaims, in mentioning his acceptance of the command. And his exultation was just ; for such things have not merely a legitimate influence in human affairs, but the fact of such a fortune being freely *risked* in the cause, showed the faith the owner had in its justice, importance, and chance of success.

Colonel Malcolm, to whose regiment Burr was appointed, had been a leading merchant of New York, and was a man of wealth and influential connections. At the time of Burr's appointment, the regiment, such as it was, lay on the Ramapo, in Orange county, New Jersey, whither he at once repaired, and found the colonel in command. Each surprised the other. Malcolm was amazed at the youthful appearance of

his second in command, and began to fear that he would be continually getting him and the regiment into trouble. But over the Malcolms of the world nothing was easier than for Burr to gain a complete ascendency; and, accordingly, a very few days sufficed for the lieutenant-colonel to inspire his chief with perfect confidence in his abilities. Burr, on his part, saw that Colonel Malcolm was an amiable gentleman, and no soldier. In a short time, the colonel removed with his family twenty miles from where the regiment lay, leaving Burr master of the situation; saying, as he departed, "You shall have all the honor of disciplining and fighting the regiment, while I will be its father." He was as good as his word. During the whole war he did not once lead the regiment into action, nor personally command it more than four weeks. From the day he joined to the day he ceased to be a soldier, Burr was, to all intents and purposes, the regiment's chief officer.

Enjoying now an independent command, Colonel Burr sprang to his duties with an ardor that soon produced surprising results. The regiment was in a condition that would have been ridiculous if the cause had been less serious, and the enemy more remote. The men, of whom there were about two hundred and sixty, were of good material, but almost wholly unacquainted with their duty; and of the officers an unusual number were young gentlemen of the city, members of wealthy families, effeminate in character, and destitute of the faintest intimation of military knowledge. These were just the circumstances to call into exercise the strong and shining qualities of Colonel Burr. He drew tight the reins of discipline which Malcolm had held with an easy hand. Severe drills and rigorous inspections took the place of formal ones. Discovering at a glance the hopeless inefficiency of many of the officers, one of his first objects was to get rid of the worst of them. After some preliminary correspondence with General Conway, and feeling his way in the regiment, he took the bold step of ordering several of the officers home, on the simple ground of their utter uselessness. If any gentleman, he told them, objected to his dismissal, he, Colonel Burr, held

himself personally responsible for the measure, and was ready to afford any satisfaction that might be demanded.

He had read his men correctly. All of the dismissed submitted to his decree without audible murmur, except one, who wrote an absurdly defiant reply to the autocratic colonel. Burr was as civil as an orange to the offended youth, informing him with elegant brevity, that on a certain day, at a certain hour, he should be at the village nearest the young gentleman's residence, where, at the tavern, he would wait any communication he might be pleased to send. To the minute, Colonel Burr was at the place. No one was there to meet him. After waiting awhile, he walked over to the family residence of the dismissed, where, indeed, he was well known, and had often been a guest. The ladies of the family, of whom a large number were assembled, received him with cordiality and distinction; the young officer, too, was extremely polite, and the party sat down to dinner as though nothing had occurred. The colonel conversed with his usual gayety and spirit until the conclusion of the repast, when he struck terror to the party by blandly requesting the young man, whom the ladies called Neddy, to walk out with him. They had not gone many steps from the house, before the ladies, in a body, came shrieking after them. "O, Colonel Burr, what are you going to do with Neddy?" cried one of them. They protested that he had meant no harm, and that he would never write so any more. They would see to that if Colonel Burr would only forgive him. The colonel, amused at the turn the affair had taken, replied, in his politest manner, that nothing was further from his desire than to harm the young gentleman; he would merely take occasion to advise him that when next he felt inclined to indite a swelling letter to a gentleman, he should submit the document to the perusal of the ladies before sending it. With this admonition the colonel handed Neddy over to the ladies, bowed, and took leave. Burr used to say that this incident gave no incorrect idea of the stuff some of the regimental officers were made of at the beginning of the Revolution.

Two months of incessant exertion on the part of the col-

onel brought the regiment to a tolerable state of discipline, and increased its effective force to over three hundred men. Burr was soon the idol of his troops, for he knew how to command them. Exacting the most prompt and implicit obedience, he commanded only what was right and necessary, and was prompt to notice and applaud good conduct. Not a blow was given in the regiment while he was at the head of it, though, at that time, corporeal punishment was a custom in the continental army. He was a natural commander. Men knew by instinct that he was competent to direct them; they followed eagerly where they saw him lead, and bore gladly what they saw he never shrank from sharing with them. His eye was everywhere. The sick he cared for with the tenderness and constancy of a brother, often assisting them with his own hands, and oftener with his purse. "His attention and care of the men," says a subaltern of the regiment, "were such as I never saw, nor any thing approaching it, in any other officer, though I served under many." Such was his vigilance, that some of his men thought him a kind of necromancer, or magician, who could see one sentinel nod and another prowling about for plunder, when he was fast asleep in his bed. In the course of a campaign or two, Malcolm's regiment was one of the best disciplined in the army.

In September, in the midst of his drilling and recruiting, a rumor ran through the neighborhood that the British, in great force, had marched out of New York, and were laying waste the lower parts of Orange county, and driving off the cattle and horses. The country people were panic-stricken and made instant preparations for flight. The rumor proved true, and positive intelligence soon reached Colonel Burr that the enemy, two thousand strong, were within thirty miles of him. To order out his whole force, to detail a small guard for his camp, and to march toward the enemy with the rest, was the work of the first hour of the afternoon; and before the sun set, he had reached Paramus, sixteen miles distant. On the march he was met by an express from General Putnam, advising him of the movements of the enemy, and recommending him to retreat, with the public stores in his keeping, into the

mountains. Observing that he would never run away from an enemy he had not seen, and that he would be answerable for the public stores and for the troops, he pushed on toward Paramus, with new energy. There he found a body of militia of the county, that had rendezvoused at Paramus on the first alarm, and were making confusion worse confounded by their ill-directed, frantic exertions. Among their other feats, they had pulled down most of the fences of the neighboring farms with a vague idea, dear to the minds of militia, of making breast-works with which to stay the conquering progress of the enemy. On Burr's arrival, he took the command of these disorderly troops; and though, as one of them afterward said, he seemed but a boy, yet as he alone appeared to know what he was about, they obeyed him willingly. His own men he posted in a strong position, and took the usual measures to guard against surprise during the night. The militia, after first directing them to repair the damage they had done, he provided for in a similar manner. Then, selecting seventeen of his best men, he started, soon after dark, and marched with all the rapidity possible, and in perfect silence, toward the scene of the enemy's devastations. He was determined on seeing for himself what there was there to run away from.

About ten o'clock in the evening, when within three miles of Hackensack, he received certain information that the most advanced of the enemy's pickets was one mile distant. His men, who had marched thirty miles since leaving camp, were now extremely fatigued. He led them to a wood near by, and ordered them to lie down and keep perfectly silent until he should return. In a few minutes the whole party were asleep

Colonel Burr now went forward alone to reconnoiter. With the stealthy caution of an Indian, he glided toward the picket, and saw them at length, lying on the ground, guarded by two sentinels. He was near enough to overhear their watchword. He then made a wide detour, and ascertained that this picket was so far in advance of the main body as to be out of hearing. In making these observations, and thoroughly satisfying himself of their correctness, the greater part of the night passed, and before he again reached his own party, it was

within an hour of daybreak. He now quietly and quickly woke his men, told them in a few decided words that he was going to attack the enemy's picket, ordered them to follow at a certain distance, and forbade any man to speak, on pain of instant death. The little column pushed forward rapidly. So accurately had the colonel noted the locality, and calculated the positions of the sentinels, that he was able to lead his men between those two unsuspecting individuals at the moment when they were farthest apart; and he was almost upon the sleeping picket before a man of it began to stir. At the distance of ten yards, Burr, who was a pace or two in advance, was challenged by a sentinel, whom he instantly shot dead, and then gave the word for the attack. With fixed bayonets his men rushed upon the drowsy foe, who were made prisoners before they were completely awake. One officer, a sergeant, a corporal, and twenty-seven privates fell into their hands on this occasion. Only one of the picket, beside the sentinel, made any resistance, and he was overpowered after he had received two bayonet wounds. He attempted to march away with his comrades, but, after going a short distance, was compelled to lie down, exhausted and fainting from loss of blood.

"Go a little further, my good fellow," said Burr, "and we will get a surgeon for you."

"Ah, sir," gasped the dying veteran, "all the doctors in America can do me no service, for I am a dying man; but it grieves me sore to the heart to think I have served my king upward of twenty years, and at length must die with a charged musket in my hand."

In a few minutes, surrounded by friends and foes equally sympathizing, the old soldier breathed his last. Of the attacking party not a man received a scratch.

Instantly Colonel Burr, with the instinct of a true soldier, set about turning this slight and easy victory to the greatest possible advantage. He dispatched an express from the very scene of his exploit to the main body of his troops at Paramus, ordering them to march toward him immediately, with all the militia of the district. In various directions he dis-

patched messengers to rally the country to his support. The news of the night's adventure, magnified into a splendid victory over the red coats, flew like the wind, and displaced the panic of the day before by its natural consequence, an all-defying confidence. At that time the patriots stood in such awe of the British regulars that the actual killing of a few, and the parade of a few more as prisoners, were events of a most inspiring nature, calculated to call forth every musket of the neighborhood in which they occurred. Before night, Colonel Burr found himself at the head of an imposing force, with which he continued to make such terrible demonstrations, that the enemy retreated with precipitation, leaving behind them the cattle they had collected. All night Colonel Burr was again on the alert, arranging his miscellaneous forces, and preparing to march on the morrow in pursuit. But in the morning, came peremptory orders for his regiment to join the main body of the army in Pennsylvania, where Washington was fighting hand to hand with the British for the possession of Philadelphia, with large odds against him. For forty-eight hours he had not once closed his eyes, nor scarcely sat down; yet nothing but the arrival of these orders could have held him back from an impetuous march after the flying enemy. For fifty years the events of these exciting days and nights were narrated in the county; where, to the last, Colonel Burr had devoted friends. In the army the story of his taking off the picket so neatly gave him new popularity.

In all his busy career, Colonel Burr could scarcely ever have been more absorbed in his duties than while thus drilling and fighting his regiment in Orange county, during the first weeks of his exercising independent command. Yet it was there and then that he formed an acquaintance with a lady who, if we may believe a lover's language, first made him respect the intellect of woman, and to whom he owed the happiest hours the happiest years, of his existence.

At Paramus, sixteen miles from where his regiment lay, there lived, in modest elegance, a family of the name of Prevost, a branch of a family distinguished in the society and in the annals of England. Colonel Prevost was with his regi-

ment in the West Indies, and at Paramus lived his wife, Theodosia Prevost, her sister Miss De Visme, and their mother, Mrs. De Visme, and the two little sons of Colonel and Mrs Prevost. The ladies were accomplished and intelligent; for a long time their house had been the center of the most elegant society of the vicinity, and after the Revolution had begun, officers of rank in the American army still visited them. By the strict law of the state they would have been compelled to withdraw to the British army, and some of the severer Whigs wished the law to be enforced in their case, as it had been in others. But these ladies, besides being beloved in the neighborhood, guarded their conduct with so much tact that no very serious opposition was made to their residence within the American lines. The sudden death of Colonel Prevost in the West Indies gave them at length the right to embrace either party in the great dispute. When Colonel Burr took the command in that part of the country, the Prevosts held their old position, and their house was a favorite resort of the American officers. It is not unlikely that his acquaintance with the family began on that night of terror when the British threatened to lay waste the country, and the American militia attacked the farm fences. If so, the young soldier must have presented himself to the ladies in the character that ladies love, that of a hero and protector; a protector from the ravages of troops who were there for the express purpose of plundering and destroying. Be that as it may, it is certain that about this time Mrs. Prevost and Colonel Burr conceived for each ether a regard which rapidly warmed into an ardent passion.

But there was no time for dalliance now; he at once began his march across New Jersey, using all his usual vigilance to avoid the enemy, who were known to be in motion, but for what object was uncertain. In November, 1777, he joined the main army, twenty miles above Philadelphia, and after holding a position in advance for some weeks, went into winter quarters, with the rest of the troops, at Valley Forge.

There, as elsewhere, his relations with the commander-in-chief were unfortunate. He planned an expedition against the

British posts on Staten Island, the localities and inhabitants of which had been familiar to him from childhood. He proposed the scheme to General Washington, and asked for two hundred men of his own regiment as a nucleus, relying on his ability to raise the country in case he should appear there with a respectable body of troops. General Washington rejected the proposal; and when, afterward, he acted upon the idea, gave the command of the expedition to Lord Stirling, under whom it proved a failure. There, too, as elsewhere, Colonel Burr contrived to distinguish himself in circumstances that gave no promise of an opportunity. The American army had gone into winter quarters after a succession of discomfitures; and being still in the neighborhood of a powerful enemy, and far less able to cope with him than before, they were discouraged and *nervous*. Ten miles from the town of hovels in which the main body cowered, shivered and starved during that dreadful winter, there was a pass called the Gulf, from which the alarm was to be expected if the British army should menace an attack. A strong body of militia was stationed there to defend the pass and to watch the movements of the enemy. These militia fancied they heard the tramp of British columns in every nocturnal noise, and were continually sending false alarms to head-quarters, which obliged the general to get the troops under arms, and, frequently, to keep them on the alert during the whole night. These alarms, it was soon found, arose from the want of a proper system of observation, and from a general looseness of discipline in the corps. In these circumstances, General McDougal, who well knew the quality of Colonel Burr as a soldier, recommended General Washington to withdraw from the guard at the Gulf all officers superior in rank to Burr, and give him the command of the post. It was done.

On taking the command, Colonel Burr proceeded at once to put in force a system of the most rigorous discipline. He was ubiquitous as usual; visiting the most remote sentinels precisely at the moment when he was least expected, and when his presence was least agreeable. The daily drills were severe and regular; his detection of offenders magical and relentless.

To militiamen, who had been accustomed, while in winter quarters, to lead lives of perfect idleness, to leave camp and return to it almost at their pleasure, and to regard all persons possessing property calculated to solace the tedium of a soldier's winter, in the light of Tories, whom it was patriotism to plunder, Colonel Burr's system was insupportable. The better class of the troops saw that this unaccustomed rigor was necessary; but a majority were exceedingly discontented, and finally resolved, at any cost, to rid themselves of their commander. Burr was informed of their intention, and of the time when he was to receive his quietus. That evening, before ordering out the detachment, he caused every cartridge to be withdrawn from the muskets, and provided himself with a well-sharpened sword. It was a bright, moonlight evening, and as he marched along the line he looked the ringleaders in the face, keenly watching for the first offensive movement. At length a man stepped from the ranks, leveled his musket at him, and cried out, "Now is your time, my boys." With a quickness and self-possession peculiarly his own, Colonel Burr raised his sword and struck the arm of the mutineer above the elbow, breaking the bone, and leaving the limb hanging by little more than the skin.

"Take your place in the line, sir," said the colonel, quietly.

The man obeyed. In a few minutes the corps was dismissed; the man went to bed; the amputation of the arm was completed by the surgeon; and no more was heard of the mutiny. While Colonel Burr commanded at that post, the army slept in their huts undisturbed. There was not one false alarm.

It was during this winter that the popularity of General Gates, and the discontents of some officers nearer the person of General Washington, gave rise to the well-known cabal to supplant the commander-in-chief. During the previous autumn, while Washington had lost Philadelphia, and experienced little but disaster, the fortune of war, rather than his own generalship, had given Gates the glory of Burgoyne's surrender, an event which electrified the world, and raised General Gates to a popularity disproportioned to his merits. Colonel Burr was too young an officer to take a leading part in the move-

ments against General Washington ; but it appears to have had his sympathy. His dislike to the general was rooted ; and the general, though he trusted and valued Colonel Burr as an officer, is said, even at this time, to have distrusted him as a man.

With the commencement of active operations in the spring these intrigues ceased; and the murmurs against the commander-in-chief were soon drowned in the applause which rewarded his partial success at the battle of Monmouth. In that action Colonel Burr commanded, in the absence of his seniors, one of the brigades of Lord Stirling's division, the brigade consisting of his own regiment, and parts of two others. On this occasion, his activity and vigilance, his long-continued exertions during three of the hottest days and nights of summer, came near proving fatal to him. All through the sultry night that preceded the battle, he was on the alert, surveying the ground and preparing for the fight.

From before the dawn of the eventful day until late in the evening, his men were under arms, either engaged or waiting orders, exposed to a sun so powerful as to be only less fatal than the enemy's fire. Toward noon, while Stirling was thundering away with his artillery at the enemy, Colonel Burr perceived a detachment of the British issuing opposite him from the wood which hemmed in the small marshy plain in which the battle was fought. Before him was a morass over which a bridge had been thrown to the solid ground beyond. Eager for a share in the glory of the day, he instantly gave the word for his brigade to cross this bridge, and march toward the approaching enemy. When about half his force had crossed, and were within the enemy's fire, one of General Washington's aids galloped up to Colonel Burr and ordered him to halt his men, and hold them where they were until further orders. Burr remonstrated vehemently. He said it was madness to halt with his force so divided that it could not be formed, and though within range of the enemy's artillery could make no effectual resistance. The aid-de-camp replied that the order was peremptory and must be obeyed, then rode away, leaving Colonel Burr in a position most distressing.

The cannon-balls soon began to roar above the heads of his men, and to strike with threatening proximity. Soon Colonel Burr saw brave men begin to fall about him, in consequence, as he thought, of blundering generalship; and his feelings toward the commander-in-chief were deeply embittered. In a few minutes Colonel Dummer, second in comand to Burr, was killed; and, soon after, at a moment when Colonel Burr had by chance thrown his leg forward, a ball struck his horse on the saddle-girth, killed the animal instantly, and tumbled his rider headlong on the ground. Burr was up again in a moment uninjured. As no further orders arrived, the men who had crossed the bridge rejoined their comrades; and what their commander had fondly hoped would have been a glorious and successful charge resulted in confusion, demoralization, and loss. Smarting under this disappointment, it is not surprising that Burr should have warmly taken the side of General Lee in the contest which ensued between that officer and General Washington. It was in a letter to Burr that Lee made the remark frequently quoted, that he was going to resign his commission, retire to Virginia, and learn to hoe tobacco, "which I find," said the irate and sarcastic general, "is the best school to form a consummate *general*."

It was late in the night after the battle, before Colonel Burr threw himself upon the ground to sleep. What with the heat, and with his labors, which had been unremitted for forty hours, he was completely exhausted, and he sank into so profound a sleep that he had lain for some hours in the morning sun before he awoke. The effect of this exposure was extremely injurious. On getting up he could scarcely walk, so stiffened were his limbs; and in the course of the day worse symptoms appeared. His constitution did not recover from the effects of those days and nights at Monmouth for more than five years, the disease having finally taken the form of chronic diarrhea, from which his abstemiousness in diet at length, but very gradually, relieved him. During the rest of the Monmouth campaign, it was with difficulty and pain that he performed the duties of his command.

Immediately after the battle, he was dispatched by General

Washington to move about in the vicinity of New York, to procure information respecting the motions and intentions of the enemy; which latter it was of the first importance to ascertain. He was desired "to send one, two, or three trusty persons over to the city to get the reports, the newspapers, and the *truth*, if they can," and "to employ three, four or more persons to go to Bergen Heights, Weehawk, Hoebuck, or any other heights thereabout, convenient to observe the motions of the enemy's shipping." This commission he executed to the satisfaction of General Washington, and, returning after an absence of some weeks to the main body, was ordered to march with his regiment to West Point, "with all convenient dispatch, marching ten miles a day, as water and ground will permit." The regiment, however, marched without its commanding officer, as he was selected by General Washington to perform the delicate duty of conducting certain influential Tories within the British lines. That done, he proceeded to West Point, his health being then completely broken.

Finding himself in the autumn quite unfit for duty, he took a short leave, and spent a few weeks at his old home in Elizabethtown, greatly to the improvement of his health. Assured that nothing but some months of repose would place him beyond the danger of relapse, he applied to General Washington for leave "to retire from *pay* and duty" till the next campaign. "My anxiety to be out of pay," said he, "arises in no measure from intention or wish to avoid any requisite service. But too great a regard to malicious surmises, and a delicacy perhaps censurable, might otherwise hurry me unnecessarily into service, to the prejudice of my health, and without any advantage to the public." General Washington replied that this was carrying delicacy a little *too* far; it was not customary, and it would be unjust; and, therefore, while he had the leave asked for, his pay would be continued. Upon the receipt of the general's reply, Colonel Burr repaired forthwith to West Point, being unwilling to accept a furlough unless his pay was intermitted.

During part of the winter he was the officer in command of

that important post. He was now twenty-three years old, but the youthfulness of his appearance still gave rise to ludicrous incidents. One day, while he was at West Point, a farmer came to the works, and asked to see Colonel Burr. An orderly sergeant conducted him to the apartment where Colonel Burr was.

"Sir," said the farmer, "I wish to see Colonel Burr, as I have something to say to him."

"You may proceed," was the reply, "I am Colonel Burr."

The countryman looked incredulous, and said, "I suppose you are Colonel Burr's *son*."

The sentinel at the door overheard this colloquy, and Burr thus acquired the nickname in the regiment of *Colonel Burr's son*.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE WESTCHESTER LINES.

CONDITION OF THE COUNTRY BEFORE COLONEL BURR TOOK THE COMMAND — SUPPRESSES PLUNDERING — HIS HABITS AS A SOLDIER — DESTROYS THE BLOCK FORT — LOVE ADVENTURE BY NIGHT — RESIGNS HIS COMMISSION — TESTIMONY OF THE MEN WHOM HE COMMANDED — ANECDOTES — INTERVIEW WITH MRS. ARNOLD AT PARAMUS — EFFECTS OF THE WAR UPON HIS CHARACTER AND FORTUNE.

IN January, 1779, Colonel Burr was appointed to a post of greater importance and difficulty than any he had previously held, and one in which he acquired his greatest distinction as a soldier. He was placed in command of the "lines" in Westchester county, New York, a region lying between the posts of the British at Kingsbridge, and those of the Americans fifteen or twenty miles above them.

This district of country, from the day the British were masters of the city of New York, was more exposed to the worst ravages of war than any other portion of the United States A gentleman who lived in it during the first five years of the contest, says that the county was "a scene of the deepest distress. From the Croton to Kingsbridge every species of rapine and lawless violence prevailed. No man went to his bed but under the apprehension of having his house plundered or burned, and himself or family massacred before morning. Some, under the character of Whigs, plundered the Tories; while others, of the latter description, plundered the Whigs. Parties of marauders, assuming either character or none, as suited their convenience, indiscriminately assailed both Whigs and Tories. So little vigilance was used on our part, that emissaries and spies of the enemy passed and repassed without interruption." What added to the evil was, that the lower part of the county contained a large number of houses of considerable pretension, the residences of wealthy farmers or wealthier

citizens. The region was one to reward enterprising marauders.

Colonel Burr entered upon the command of the "lines" on the 13th of January; his head-quarters being at White Plains, twenty-seven miles above the city. His line of posts extended from the Hudson to the Sound, fourteen miles White Plains being midway between the two waters. His great objects were to prevent unlicensed communication with the enemy, to keep their spies from reaching the upper country, and to put a stop to the scenes of robbery and bloodshed for which the region was notorious.

The very morning on which he assumed the command, an occurrence took place which let him into the secret of the disorders. On his arrival in camp, a few days before, he had discovered that of all the duties devolving on the force about to be under his command, the one most in favor with officers and with privates, with regulars and with militia, was *scouting;* and that an expedition of the kind was then on foot, to be led by Colonel Littlefield, Burr's predecessor. Not wishing to begin his reign with an ungracious act of authority, he did not countermand the proposed excursion, though its advisableness was by no means apparent to him. On the contrary, he thought it ill-advised, and unnecessary. Nevertheless, on the very evening before he entered formally upon the duties of the station, Colonel Littlefield, with his scouting party of one hundred and fifty men, set out from White Plains, with the ostensible object of watching the enemy's movements in the neighborhood of New Rochelle. Colonel Burr was most strenuous in urging Littlefield to respect the property of friend and foe. The party were gone all night. In the morning, to the equal astonishment and disgust of Colonel Burr, the troops came straggling in loaded with plunder, and leading horses with mountains of bedding, blankets, and clothing on their backs. Officers and men seemed equally concerned in the robberies. Before the party had been in an hour, farmers from New Rochelle came into camp complaining piteously of the plunder of their houses and stables, asserting their friendliness to the patriotic cause, and imploring Colonel

Burr to restore their property. "Sir," wrote that officer in his report to General McDougal, "till now, I never wished for arbitrary power; I could gibbet half a dozen good Whigs with all the venom of an inveterate Tory!"

Colonel Burr's resolution was instantly taken. The plunder, as it came in, was deposited by the plunderers in a certain pot, to await an *equitable* division among the zealous party. Burr seized the whole of it, and proceeded immediately to take measures for its restoration. He took so decided a stand on the occasion, and made it so evident that he was in earnest, and that he was a man to be obeyed, that this affair, apparently inauspicious, was the beginning of a new order of things in the Westchester lines. For the time, however, he was utterly disgusted; particularly when he found that the officers, nearly to a man, secretly or openly favored the system of plunder. "Truly an ominous commencement," he wrote to his general. "*Is this the promised protection?* I read in the face of every child I pass; for the whole *honor* of the expedition redounds to me. I now perceive," he added, "from whence arose the ardor for scouting." The old general approved his conduct, but advised him to deal tenderly with the plunderers, "as they are brave, and are very sore by the plundering of the Tories."

Burr began that very day to set on foot a new system. He rode to every post before night set in, and announced his determination to protect all the peaceable inhabitants of the county, whether Whig or Tory, and to punish all marauders with the utmost severity of military law. Any officer who so much as connived at robbery he would send up to the general's quarters with a file of men, the hour the crime was discovered. He began, immediately, to make out a list of all the inhabitants of the district, and divided them into classes, Tories, Whigs, timid Whigs, spies, horse-thieves, and others, designating each by certain secret marks opposite his name. He also made the outline of a map, on which, as his knowledge of the country increased, he marked the roads, swamps, creeks, woods, hiding places and by-paths, which might be made available by disaffected persons in escaping pursuit, or evading ob

servation. He organized the respectable young men of the county into a corps of horsemen, to serve without pay, and on special services when summoned, and in transmitting intelligence. So complete and efficient a system of videttes, patrols, and signals was established, that nothing of the slightest importance could take place in any part of the county without immediate information of it being dispatched to head-quarters. To prevent the intrusion of the enemy's spies, who had frequently come to head-quarters on frivolous pretexts, he would not allow any one who lived below his line of posts to pass them, but appointed a few well-known persons to receive their communications and complaints, and forward them to head-quarters. Another advantage of this regulation was, that it diminished the number of vexatious applications for redress, of slight or imaginary grievances, with which previous commanders had been beset.

Colonel Burr soon had an opportunity of showing the troops and the people that he would be as strict in enforcing his regulations as he was ingenious in devising them. A few days after the affair of the scouters, the house of one Gedney was robbed by night, and the family insulted and alarmed. The next morning, a son of Gedney, disregarding the rule that no one from below might go direct to head-quarters, made his way, by secret paths, to Colonel Burr, and laid before him his complaint. Burr's first act was to order the young man into confinement for breaking the rule; which done, he bent all his energies and all the resources of his system to the detection of the plunderers. He rode over to the plundered house, where he learned that the marauders, having worn disguises, had not been recognized by Gedney or his family. By what means he detected them was unknown; but before twenty-four hours had elapsed, every man of the party had been secured, and a great part of the stolen property recovered. Upon referring to his register, Colonel Burr found that Gedney was a Tory; but he was known to have taken no active part against the patriots; and Burr had promised that all such should be protected. He therefore caused the robbers to be drawn up in presence of the troops, laden with their booty,

and then had them conducted by a company of soldiers to Gedney's house. There, he required them, first, to restore the stolen goods; next, to pay in money for such as had been lost or damaged; thirdly, he compelled each man to present Gedney with a sum of money, as a compensation for his fright and loss of time; fourthly, he had each robber tied up and flogged ten lashes; lastly, he made each of them ask pardon of the old man, and promise good behavior in future. All these things were done with the utmost deliberation and exactness, and the effects produced by them were magical. Not another house was plundered, not another family was alarmed, while Colonel Burr commanded in the Westchester lines. The mystery and swiftness of the detection, the rigor and fairness with which the marauders were treated, overawed the men whom three campaigns of lawless warfare had corrupted, and restored confidence to the people who had passed their lives in terror.

That Colonel Burr was a wizard or necromancer, and could tell a thief by looking into his face, was the firm belief of a large number of his men; an opinion which received frequent confirmation from the remarkable talent he possessed for holding his tongue till the moment arrived for speaking. Among other incidents, the following was adduced as a proof of his supernatural powers. On the day of his arrival in camp, before he had assumed the command, and before he had established any means of procuring intelligence, he visited all the posts, and took a wide survey of the country. On his return, he said to a lieutenant whom he knew, "Drake, that post on the North river will be attacked before morning; neither officers nor men know any thing of their duty; you must go and take charge of it; keep your eyes open, or you will have your throat cut." Lieutenant Drake went, and the event proved as Burr had predicted. The fort *was* attacked that night by a company of horse, whom Drake repulsed, with loss to them and honor to himself. When he returned next morning to head-quarters, bearing with him the trophies of war, and told his story to his comrades, every one wonderingly asked, how could Burr know *that?*

The habits of the man, too, were the theme of admiration among the troops. His diet was simple and spare in the extreme; he slept as lightly as a hare, and a wonderfully short time. He would throw himself upon a couch of buffalo skins, all accoutered as he was, sometimes without even taking off his boots, and after sleeping an hour or two, would spring up, perfectly awake in a moment, and, calling two or three of his trusty horsemen, mount and ride from post to post, visiting every guard and sentinel of his command, and returning at daylight to snatch another hour of sleep. During the whole of that winter, with the exception of two nights, when he was *very* differently employed, he rode from sixteen to twenty-four miles every night, between midnight and daylight, changing his route continually, so that he was always expected at all points; and if at any time he was less expected than at any other, *then*, of all other times, he was sure to present himself. He thus at every station exerted the spell of his personal presence, and every man acted as under the eye of his commander. While requiring from officers and men an amount of duty and an exact obedience to which they had never before been accustomed, he was not less particular in attending to their health, comfort, and pleasure. Their clothing, food, lodgings, and medicines, were objects of his thoughtful care, and he even contrived games for the amusement of the men when off duty.

Men treated justly, and commanded ably, never behave in any but one way, and that is gloriously *well*. The troops under command of Colonel Burr did so. They caught his spirit, and seconded his endeavors with enthusiasm. During the first weeks of his command, there were several contests with gangs of horse-thieves and other robbers, in which the troops fought with Burr's own intrepidity. Once, in that winter, Governor Tryon came out of New York with two thousand men for the purpose of driving off cattle, and of destroying certain salt-works in Westchester county, on the shore of Long Island Sound. Burr received instant information of this formidable movement, and sent word to General Putnam, who was then nearer the enemy than himself, that if

he would keep them at bay for a few hours, he would himself fall upon their rear and give a good account of them. Burr set out immediately with all his force, regular and irregular, and marched toward the Sound. On the way he received from General Putnam the information that Tryon had turned off toward Connecticut; which induced Colonel Burr to change the direction of his march. A few hours later, he learned that this information was erroneous, when he again altered his course, and marched with such rapidity that he got within cannon-shot of Governor Tryon's rear before night. The British, now thoroughly frightened, made off with such celerity as to escape Burr's exhausted force, leaving all their cattle and plunder behind them, and a large number of stragglers.

Soon after this affair, the British erected a block fort in the lower part of the county, which Colonel Burr resolved to destroy. This fort was in the enemy's country, within a few miles of a post where some thousands of the British troops were quartered; and it was therefore necessary to effect its destruction with little noise, and with great dispatch. According to his custom, Colonel Burr began by personally and thoroughly inspecting the edifice, and the country adjacent; noting accurately the distances, and measuring with his eye the height of the port-holes. Hand-grenades, rolls of port-fire, canteens filled with inflammable materials, and short ladders, were next provided; and a number of men, volunteers, were carefully instructed in the use of those agents of destruction. Forty volunteers were to form the party of attack, twenty of whom carried the inflammables and the ladders. Early in the evening the expedition left camp, and reached a place one mile from the fort about two o'clock in the morning. Here the party halted. Colonel Burr now disposed of his men so as to cut off the escape of the garrison, and ordered Captain Black, with the party of volunteers, to advance silently and swiftly to the fort, disregarding the challenge of the sentinels, to place the ladders, and throw into each port-hole a mass of the combustibles with a slow match attached. The plan succeeded to admiration. Before the garrison was awake, the fort was on fire past extinguishing. Hand-grenades were then thrown

into the upper port-holes, which drove the troops below. In a very few minutes they were glad enough to escape from the burning house and surrender. The fort was completely destroyed, and Colonel Burr reached camp soon after daybreak, with a long file of prisoners, and without the loss of a single man of his own party. The success of this little enterprise, and its audacity, gave new éclât to the name of the officer who planned it.

Colonel Burr's night rides have been mentioned above, and an allusion made to the fact that on *two* nights of the winter he was otherwise engaged. The story of his adventures on those nights he used to tell with peculiar pleasure, and it is surprising that so singular a narrative should not have been given to the public by some of the collectors of revolutionary incidents. The tale strikingly exemplifies Burr's executive talent.

Over the Hudson river, fifteen miles or more from the shore, lived the accomplished and charming Mrs. Prevost. From his outpost on the Hudson, Colonel Burr could see the hills among which nestled the home of this beloved family, but between them rolled a river, two miles wide, and infested with the gun-boats and sloops of the enemy, while beyond it stretched an expanse of country, held sometimes by one party, sometimes by the other, but either of whom would prevent or delay the progress of a soldier bound on an errand of love. The duties of Burr's command, too, were onerous and incessant. By day, he was an autocratic magistrate, hearing complaints, deciding disputes, writing reports, inspecting troops, sending off prisoners, purchasing supplies. We see him sending up a number of prisoners handcuffed in couples and, as they start, the guard being greatly outnumbered by them, he sends a sergeant along the line to cut the strings of their breeches, which obliged them to employ their other hand in holding up that important garment. Again, he writes to the general, "There are a number of women here of bad character, who are continually running to New York and back again; if they were men, I should flog them without mercy." Then, he is scouring the country, far and near, for shoes, for

molasses, for wheat, for rum; which last, he tells the general he can buy at White Plains at twenty dollars a gallon. By night he was riding among his posts and sentinels, knowing well that only vigilance like his kept the guards from being surprised; as was sufficiently proved when that vigilance was withdrawn.

Yet in spite of these difficulties, he contrived twice during the winter to visit Paramus. In achieving these visits, he equaled Leander in daring, and surpassed him so much in ingenuity as to get over his Hellespont with a dry over-coat, and to go glowing, instead of dripping, into the arms of his Hero. Six of his trustiest troopers, men whom he knew were devoted to him, he sent early in the evening to a place on the banks of the Hudson, since and for ever made classic ground by the residence of Washington Irving. Under the lofty bank of the river, there he had caused an ample barge to be moored, well furnished with blankets and buffalo skins. Earlier by some hours than usual, Burr left his quarters at White Plains, mounted on a small, swift horse, and galloped rapidly to the river side, visiting posts and sentries as he went. His perfect manner of procuring intelligence had made him certain that nothing requiring his presence would occur before morning yet he provided for every probability and possibility of danger, and for any unforeseen delay that might occur in his return. At nine in the evening, his faithful troopers at the barge heard the clattering of hoofs, and in a moment their commander stood in their midst, bridle in hand. Instantly, and without the interchange of a syllable, the girth was unloosened, ropes were adjusted about the body of the panting steed, and, by the method well known to farriers, the animal was gently thrown and bound; then lifted by main strength and placed on the bed provided for him in the boat. Burr stepped aboard; the men plied the muffled oars with a will; and, within half an hour, the boat grazed the opposite shore. In the same silence, and with the same celerity, as before, the horse was lifted out, unbound, and got upon his feet. A little rubbing and walking up and down restored the animal to his wonted condition. The boat was drawn snugly up on the

shore; the men laid down in the bottom of it to sleep; while Burr mounted and rode rapidly away up the hill toward the home of his heart. Before midnight, he was there. Two hours of bliss flew fast—how swiftly, lovers know. Then again to horse. About four in the morning, he was with his faithful crew on the river's bank, when the poor nag was astonished once more in the manner just described, and the party re-crossed the river. Arrived on the other side, Colonel Burr mounted, rode over to camp, which was seven miles from the river, challenging sentinels, visiting posts, and comporting him so exactly in his usual manner, that not the slightest suspicion arose of the singular way in which he had passed the night. A little before daylight, quite in his accustomed style, he gave up his horse and threw himself upon his couch. Except the two or three individuals to whom the secret was necessarily confided, not a man even of those who had aided him, knew the object of that night excursion. Twice, as before stated, he visited Mrs. Prevost in the same manner, and with equal success, while he commanded the lines of Westchester.

But no constitution could long bear such exhausting efforts, and Burr's was seriously impaired when he began them. As the spring drew on, the attacks of his disease became more frequent, and he was compelled to the conclusion that only a very long period of repose could render him fit for the duties of a campaign. On the 10th of March, 1779, he wrote to General Washington resigning his commission, giving as the reason, his physical inability to perform the duties of his command. General Washington, in accepting his resignation, observed that "he not only regretted the loss of a good officer, but the cause which made his resignation necessary." And so, after four years of active service, Colonel Burr ceased to belong to the army.

What occurred in Westchester after his retirement shows in a striking light the value of his services there. Samuel Young, who lived in the county during the war, and was one of Burr's troop of irregular horse, and after the peace held the office of surrogate, writes with more minuteness on this point than any other of Burr's fellow-soldiers. He says that during

the period of Burr's command, only two attempts were made by the enemy to surprise our guards, in both of which they were defeated; but after he left, Colonel Thompson, "a man of approved bravery," succeeded, and, in open day, the enemy surprised him at head-quarters, took him prisoner, killed or captured all his men, except about thirty, who ran away Soon after, Mr. Young's father's house was burned by a party of the enemy; and, ere long, the American lines were moved twenty miles beyond those which Burr had so completely defended. And even there the posts were not safe from surprise. The next year Colonel Green, who then commanded in the lines, and had his head-quarters near the Croton river, was attacked and killed, together with his second in command, and a large number of officers and men.

Mr. Young concludes a long narrative of Colonel Burr's achievements in Westchester county, in the following words: "Having perused what I have written, it does not appear to me that I have conveyed any adequate idea of Burr's military character. It may be aided a little by reviewing the effects he produced. The troops of which he took command were, at the time he took the command, undisciplined, negligent, and discontented. Desertions were frequent. In a few days these very men were transformed into brave and honest defenders; orderly, contented, and cheerful; confident in their own courage, and loving to adoration their commander, whom every man considered as his personal friend. It was thought a severe punishment, as well as disgrace, to be sent up to the camp, where they had nothing to do but to lounge and eat their rations. During the whole of this command there was not a single desertion, not a single death by sickness, not one made prisoner by the enemy; for Burr had taught us that a soldier with arms in his hands ought never, under any circumstances, to surrender; no matter if he was opposed to thousands, it was his duty to fight. After the first ten days there was not a single instance of robbery. The whole country under his command enjoyed security. The inhabitants, to express their gratitude, frequently brought presents of such articles as the country afforded; but Colonel Burr would ac

cept no present. He fixed reasonable prices, and paid in cash for every thing that was received, and sometimes, I know, that these payments were made with his own money. Whether these advances were repaid, I know not. Colonel Simcoe, one of the most daring and active partisans in the British army, was, with Colonels Emerick and Delancey, opposed to Burr on he lines, yet they were completely held in check. But perhaps the highest eulogy on Colonel Burr is, that no man could be found capable of executing his plans, though the example was before them. When Burr left the lines a sadness overspread the country, and the most gloomy forebodings were too soon fulfilled."

Richard Platt, who was adjutant-general to General McDougal at the time, speaks of Colonel Burr's conduct in similar terms. The officers, the soldiers, and the inhabitants, he says, though all unknown to Colonel Burr before, "were inspired with confidence by a system of consummate skill, astonishing vigilance, and extreme activity, which, in like manner, made such an impression on the enemy, that after an unsuccessful attack on one of his advanced posts, he never made any other attack on our lines during the winter. His humanity, and constant regard to the security of the property and persons of the inhabitants from injury and insult, were not less conspicuous than his military skill. No man was insulted or disturbed. The health of the troops was perfect. Not a desertion during the whole period of his command, nor a man made prisoner, although the colonel was constantly making prisoners. A country, which for three years before had been a scene of robbery, cruelty, and murder, became at once the abode of security and peace. Though his powers were despotic, they were exercised only for the peace, the security, and the protection of the surrounding country and its inhabitants."

Colonel Burr had not yet done with war. In June, when a large force of British troops seemed to threaten West Point, Colonel Burr was at Newburg, a guest of General McDougal, who was in great alarm because of his repeated failures to get word to General Washington of the movements of the enemy. The English general had stationed troops and Tories in

the passes of the mountains, who captured or killed the messengers. In these circumstances, General McDougal, who well knew Burr's ability, requested him, as a personal favor, to undertake the mission. Colonel Burr, sick as he was, and dangerous as was the errand, consented, and succeeded. He carried no written dispatch, but gave General Washington a verbal account of the critical position of affairs, which induced him to march forthwith toward the Highlands.

In making the journey across Orange county, he had a ludicrous contest with a mule, which he was fond of describing for the amusement of children ever after. The country had been swept of its horses, and arriving at the Townsend iron works with his horse completely worn out, he could procure no substitute but a half-broken mule called "Independence," notorious for its obstinate and vicious disposition. There was no choice but to attempt this animal; and, accordingly, Burr, in the presence of a number of the country people, mounted, and urged him onward. The mule was true to his name, and would not move. The rider whipped and spurred, the by-standers pulled and shouted, the mule kicked and reared. After a minute or two of these proceedings, the infuriated beast bolted from the crowd, and ran up a steep bank, and reached the top before his rider could stop him. On arriving there, Burr managed to turn him round, and was trying every argument to induce him to descend, when the mule appeared suddenly to conceive an idea. About half way down the hill there was a platform, with a large opening in it, through which charcoal was accustomed to be "shot," a prodigious heap of which had accumulated below on the side of the hill. The mule, with malice in his mind, made for this aperture, and leaped through it upon the coal. But the rider was not to be thrown so easily; and down the mountain of charcoal, the mule and the man slowly slid together, amid clouds of dust, and the laughter of the crowd. When they reached the bottom, the animal showed signs of being more tractable, and, after being led a mile or two, went perfectly well; and was ever after a tolerably behaved mule.

This journey cost him dear. He went immediately after to

Connecticut, where, at New Haven, he was compelled to take to his bed, and spend some days in complete quiet. While still extremely debilitated, he heard of the landing of two thousand of the enemy's troops, one thousand at East Haven, and the others at West Haven. Governor Tryon, Burr's old acquaintance, commanded the force which landed at East Haven, where he distinguished himself, in his usual style, by setting the town on fire and allowing his men to commit disgraceful excesses. The people of New Haven were in dreadful alarm. The women and children were hurried from the town. The roads leading to the country were crowded with fugitives and vehicles, hastily loaded with household goods. Hearing that the enemy were actually approaching, Colonel Burr rose from his bed, dressed himself, and proceeded to a part of the town where he was informed the militia of the place had assembled. Finding them panic-stricken and about to fly, he addressed them, and offered to lead them against the enemy; but terror possessed their souls, and in a few minutes the whole body melted away and vanished from the scene. He was then told that the students of Yale College had organized themselves into military companies, and were now drawn up on the College green. He galloped to the spot, and reining up his horse in front of the youthful corps, he told them who he was, urged them to set an example, to march out against the ruthless foe, and defend the rights of which they would soon become the inheritors, or the loss of which it would soon be theirs to deplore. The exploits of Aaron Burr were familiar at least to every young man in New England; and when, at the conclusion of his speech, Colonel Burr asked them to receive him as their leader, and, under his command, attack the enemy, there was no hesitation or faltering among them. They marched into the town, where they were joined by a small body of militia, and then advanced boldly toward the enemy. On coming near them, some shots were exchanged, and Governor Tryon, not knowing how great a force might be opposed to him, halted, and then fell back a little to wait for his artillery. Colonel Burr thus kept him from advancing for three or four priceless hours, during which all the

women and children, the sick, and immense quantities of valuable property were removed to places of safety. When, at length, Tryon, with all his force, began again to move toward the town, Burr led off his regiment of boys in excellent order. The old soldier delighted to tell this little story. He was a lover of young life, and proud of the confidence which the young ever reposed in him. Nothing in his military career gave him such pleasure to look back upon as this comparatively trivial incident.

The excitement of this adventure sustained him while it lasted, but he dismounted from his horse only to go again to his bed. During the succeeding autumn and winter he did little but take care of his shattered constitution, and form plans for the prosecution of his legal studies.

In the summer of 1780 he was in New Jersey once more, and making such frequent visits to the house of Mrs. Prevost, as to excite a general belief among his friends that he was paying his court to the sister of that lady, Miss De Visme. Colonel Troup, as we read in one of his letters, tells Burr in June of this year, that the Miss Livingstons had inquired about him in a very friendly manner, and since he had been with them, he had had an opportunity of removing the suspicion they had of his courting Miss Visme. "They believe nothing of it now," adds Colonel Troup, "and attribute your visits to Paramus to motives of friendship for Mrs. Prevost and the family. Wherever I am, and can with propriety, you may be sure I shall represent this matter in its true light." From this it would appear that Colonel Burr had not yet confided his real object to his friends, of whom Colonel Troup was then one of the most intimate; and remained such, through all vicissitudes, for nearly seventy years.

In September, it was Colonel Burr's fortune to witness at the house of Mrs. Prevost a memorable scene.

The news of Arnold's treason was flying in awful whispers over the country. Soon after the first shock of the discovery, came touching descriptions of Mrs. Arnold's grief at her husband's crime, of which, it was universally believed, she had been ignorant up to the moment of his flight from West

Point. The historic reader is familiar with Hamilton's high-flown narrative of the scene which transpired under his own eyes.

"Arnold, a moment before setting out," wrote Hamilton to Colonel Laurens, "went into Mrs. Arnold's apartment, and informed her that some transactions had just come to light which must for ever banish him from his country. She fell into a swoon at this declaration; and he left her in it to consult his own safety, till the servants, alarmed at her cries, came to her relief. She remained frantic all day; accusing every one who approached her with an intention to murder her child (an infant in her arms); and exhibiting every other mark of the most genuine and agonizing distress. Exhausted by the fatigue and tumult of her spirits, her frenzy subsided toward evening, and she sank into all the sadness of affliction. It was impossible not to have been touched with her situation. Every thing affecting in female tears, or in the misfortunes of beauty; every thing pathetic in the wounded tenderness of a wife, or in the apprehensive fondness of a mother; and, till I have reason to change the opinion, every thing amiable in the sufferings of innocence; conspired to make her an object of sympathy to all who were present. She experienced the most delicate attention, and every friendly office, till her departure for Philadelphia."

This was the romantic falsehood of the affair. It was fitted to deceive the good-hearted Hamilton, who was then himself a lover, and therefore full of tenderness for all women; and the story was one which a young gentleman of a rhetorical turn, and who indeed owed his advancement to "the flowers of his pen," would delight to tell. It fell to Burr's lot to become acquainted with the repulsive truth. He was sitting one evening with Mrs. Prevost, when the approach of a party of horse was heard, and soon after, a lady vailed, and attired in a riding-habit, burst into the room, and hurrying toward Mrs. Prevost, was on the point of addressing her. Seeing a gentleman present whom, in the dim light of the apartment, she did not recognize, she paused, and asked in an anxious tone,

"Am I safe? Is this gentleman a friend?"

"Oh, yes," was Mrs. Prevost's reply, "he is my most particular friend, Colonel Burr."

"Thank God!" exclaimed Mrs. Arnold, for she it was; 'I've been playing the hypocrite, and I'm tired of it."

She then gave an account of the way she had deceived General Washington, Colonel Hamilton, and the other American officers, who, she said, believed her innocent of the treason, and had given her an escort of horse from West Point. She made no scruple of confessing the part she had borne in the negotiations with the British general, and declared it was she who had induced her husband to do what he had done. She passed the night at Paramus, taking care to resume her acting of the outraged and frantic woman, whenever strangers were present. Colonel Burr's relations with the Shippen family, of which Mrs. Arnold was a member, had been of the most intimate character from childhood. They had been his father's friends; and the orphan boy had been taken from his mother's grave to their home in Philadelphia. He stood toward this fascinating, false-hearted woman almost in the light of a younger brother, and he kept her secret until she was past being harmed by the telling of it.

With this scene the history of Colonel Burr's military career may fitly close. He had borne well his part in the revolutionary struggle. That combination of qualities and defects which fits a man to be a successful military commander, he possessed in a more remarkable degree, perhaps, than any other American who has won distinction in war. If he had been as much in the eye of Napoleon as he was in Washington's, the emperor would have made a marshal of him, and he would have shared with Napoleon his splendid immortality. But for that, as for so much else, Aaron Burr had the misfortune to be born on the wrong continent.

During the four years of his connection with the army, his fortune was greatly impaired. Every officer who had any thing to lose, suffered in his circumstances in the Revolution, and Burr more than most. He had the popular and fatal vice of improvidence. At the age when Washington was earning three guineas a day in the woods, glad of the oppor

tunity to do so, and rather proud of the fact than otherwise, Burr was spending, with inconsiderate generosity, the capital of his patrimony. With amazing talents for gaining money, he had an equally wonderful facility for getting rid of it. It slipped through his fingers; it ran out of his pocket; it would *not* stay with him. To see a fellow-soldier in distress, and to empty his purse for his relief, were simultaneous actions with him.

Nor did he spare expense in forwarding any scheme of his own, whether of pleasure or advantage. From his correspondence at this time, it is plain that he was a frequent lender of money to embarrassed friends. Colonel Troup tells him on one occasion that he had received from Mr. Edwards a thousand pounds of Burr's money, a part of which, says Troup, I shall take the liberty of borrowing, and send the rest to the owner. Ogden, as we have seen, sells Burr's horse, and writes to him that he can not send him the proceeds, for the excellent reason that he has spent them. These are fair examples of Burr's *looseness* in affairs pecuniary. It is a pleasant way enough while the money lasts; but it never does last. No fortune can stand the drain of an uncalculating improvidence. And a worse feature of the case is, that a man who is careless of *meum* is in frightful danger of losing some portion of his regard for *tuum*, also. "*The worth and dignity of gold*," was one of the regenerating phrases with which Goethe set right his age. The strong, slow characters that *support* the social fabric, know its truth by an instinct which they too often want who adorn, and cheer, who move and advance the race.

Generous we may truly call Colonel Burr. But there is a nobler generosity than that exercised by him; it is allied with frugality, and becomes possible through frugality. Burr was, at all periods of his life, extremely liable to be imposed upon. His feelings were easily moved; his acuteness utterly failed him the moment his tenderness was awakened; and he gave freely of what he never really felt the value to relieve distresses which he could not witness without pain.

Another tendency of his nature was strengthened by the

war. It is the soldier's art to instantly adapt means to ends; it is his duty, by all means, to gain his ends. His object, the destruction of the enemy, is simple, obvious, unmistakable; and, in compassing it, he not merely *may*, but *must*, be deaf to the cry of anguish. He is not merely released from the moral restraints of peace, but he is obliged to trample them under foot. He destroys without compunction; he kills without compassion. His mind is fixed upon his *object;* he burns merely to *succeed.* Victory alone, victory always, is accepted as proof of his ability. But in peace it is not always glorious to succeed; for then we estimate success chiefly by the means used to attain it.

Aaron Burr, like his father before him, was a man who had by nature a marvelous faculty of bringing things to pass. He saw his *object* with eagle clearness and he had a wonderful intuitive sense of the means, and all the means, and, particularly, the *readiest* means, by which that object could be reached. This faculty will be abundantly exemplified by-and-by. It is alluded to here, merely for the purpose of suggesting that four years of a soldier's life may have had the two-fold effect, first, of intensifying his perception of objects to be gained, and, secondly, of diminishing his scrupulousness with regard to the use of means.

CHAPTER IX.

ADMISSION TO THE BAR, AND MARRIAGE

THE AMERICAN BAR BEFORE THE REVOLUTION—BURR RESUMES HIS LEGAL STUDIES—HIS CORRESPONDENCE WITH MRS. PREVOST—ADMISSION TO THE BAR—CHARACTER OF MRS. PREVOST—THEIR MARRIAGE—REMOVAL TO NEW YORK.

NEXT to war, the law had been, from an early period in the history of the colonies, the favorite profession with their young men of spirit. John Adams, in 1756, when he had just begun his legal studies, writes to a friend in justification of the choice he had made of a profession. One of his reasons was, that "the students in the law are very numerous, and some of them youths of which no country, no age, would need to be ashamed. And if," he adds, "I can gain the honor of treading in the rear, and silently admiring the noble air and gallant achievements of the foremost rank, I shall think myself worthy of a louder triumph than if I had headed the whole army of orthodox ministers." After the termination of the old French war, the law began to be a lucrative profession also. Joseph Reed, of Philadelphia, writing in 1767, when he had been but two years at the bar, mentioned that his professional income was a thousand pounds a year. He was, no doubt, unusually fortunate. But, at that time, there were not many occupations carried on in the colonies, in the exercise of which, a young man of two years' standing, could have earned so much.

The legal system, was, of course, in all respects, that of the mother country. The wig and gown were worn by lawyers and judges; and much is implied in that trivial circumstance. Young men of fortune thought their studies incomplete until they had resided two years at one of the Inns of Court in London. In the Temple Church may still be seen, or

might, a few years ago, some tablets erected to the memory of American students who died while pursuing their studies in London before the Revolution. If Aaron Burr had come upon the stage of action a few years earlier, it is likely enough that, with his pecuniary means, he would have sought, by such a residence abroad, to have hastened his ascent to the highest walks of the profession at home. For it was a great thing, and an honorable, in those days, even to have seen the country which the colonists were proud to call their own.

For eighteen months after leaving the army, Colonel Burr was an invalid, and he did little but visit his friends, read French, write letters, and wait upon Mrs. Prevost. In the autumn of 1780, his health having greatly improved, he began to study law in earnest, under Judge Patterson, of New Jersey. Judge Patterson was a thorough lawyer, and desired to make his pupils such, by grounding them well in the principles of the law, and not till afterward instructing them in the practice. Burr desired to reverse this order, and acquire the practice first. There were reasons why he wished to hurry into the practice of his profession: he was in love; his purse needed replenishing, or would soon need it; and it was certain, that if the independence of the colonies were secured, of which there seemed little doubt, Whig lawyers would monopolize the business of the profession, and the offices to which the profession leads. With the intention of attempting a short cut to the bar, he left the office of the methodical Patterson in the spring of 1781, and went to reside at Haverstraw, in New York, with Thomas Smith, a city practitioner of note, but now suspended from business by the war. Mr. Smith had a good library, and plenty of leisure. With him Burr made a peculiar and characteristic arrangement. For a certain sum, the lawyer agreed to devote a specified time to his pupil every day, and to answer any questions he might propose. Burr now read law, literally, day and night, sometimes spending twenty hours at his books out of the twenty-four; taking notes as he read, reserving doubtful points to be elucidated by his instructor, and endeavoring, in all ways, to acquire the familiar use of the weapons with which lawyers war with one

another and with justice. To become *expert*, not profound, was the object of his immediate exertions. Of such students it may be observed, that having become proficient in the practice, they are never drawn to meditate deeply upon the theory of their profession.

His letters, during the year, show that his favorite authors hen were Chesterfield, Voltaire, and Rousseau. There was much studying of French in Burr's circle. The family of Mrs. Prevost was of Swiss origin, and French had been their native language. The "Hermitage," the family seat of the De Visme's, where Mrs. Prevost now resided, had a considerable library of French books, which nourished Burr's French tastes, and introduced to his notice several authors of whom he had been ignorant. In his letters to Mrs. Prevost, his favorite authors were frequently the theme of remark; to which she, as often, gracefully replies. She says on one occasion, that his favorable opinion of Voltaire pleased her, because it showed that he had a mind of his own. "The English," said she, "from national jealousy and envy to the French, detract him; but, without being his disciple, we may do justice to his merit, and admire him as a judicious and ingenious author." In another letter, she extols religion, and declares that "worlds should not purchase the little she possessed." To something Burr had said about Chesterfield, she replied, that the indulgence which he applauded in that author was the only part of his writings she thought reprehensible, but that only when all the world turn envoys, will Chesterfield be their proper guide. In one letter, she tells him, that their being the subject of much inquiry, conjecture, and calumny was no more than they ought to expect: "My attention to you," she adds, "was even pointed enough to attract the observation of all who visited the house; but your esteem more than compensated for the worst they could say."

Burr's reply to this letter is characteristic. He tells her that the calumniator shall one day repent his insolence and in the mean time, they must be more cautious in preserving appearances. "*Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re*, is a maxim," he says, "which would bear *sheets of comment and days of re-*

flection." They must not mind these trifles. "That mind," he adds, "is truly great which can bear with equanimity the trifling and unavoidable vexations of life, and be affected only by those events which determine our substantial bliss. Every period, and every situation has a portion of those trifling crosses; and those who expect to avoid them all, or conquer them all, must be wretched without respite." This train of remark was habitual with Colonel Burr all his days. To present a panoply of steel to the minor shafts of misfortune, to be quick to discern the event of real importance, to be neither elated nor depressed by whatever might occur, to bound lightly up after the farthest fall, to acquire every kind of degree of self-control, were what he chiefly enjoined upon his children, his pupils, and his protegées. Self-control, Burr would say, was the means of self-indulgence, and the condition of controlling others.

After reading law for six months at Haverstraw, he thought himself competent to practice; an opinion to which an event of the time probably contributed. In November of this year, the legislature of New York passed an act disqualifying all the Tory lawyers from practicing in the courts of that State. Burr no sooner heard of this than he resolved to make an effort to realize part of its benefits himself, and, a few days after, he was in Albany for the purpose of applying for admission to the bar. But difficulties arose. The rule of the court was, that candidates must have spent three years in the study of the law before admission, and Colonel Burr could scarcely pretend to more than one year's study. Nor could he find a lawyer in the State willing to make a motion for th court to set aside the rule. In these circumstances, the can didate undertook the management of the case himself. Hav ing first conciliated the good will of the judge in private, and made him acquainted with the grounds of his application, he appeared in court at the proper time, made the requisite motion, and gave the reasons why he thought it should be granted. He said that he had begun his studies before the Revolution, and should long since have been entitled to admission to the bar, but for the service he had rendered as a soldier. "No

rule," he observed, "could be intended to injure one whose only misfortune is having sacrificed his time, his constitution, and his fortune to his country." The court decided that the rule with regard to the period of study might, for the reasons given, be dispensed with, provided the candidate could show that he possessed the requisite knowledge. The examining counsel, as may be imagined, gave him no indulgence. They wished his failure. But after an examination, prolonged, critical, and severe, which he passed triumphantly, he was licensed as an attorney. This event occurred on the 19th of January, 1782. On the 17th of April following, he was admitted as counselor. He was then twenty-six years of age.

He took an office in Albany, began the practice of the law, and seems almost immediately to have been immersed in business. He had acquired celebrity in the State as a soldier, and no man of his years had a wider circle of acquaintance among the class who indulge in profitable suits at law. The old Tory lawyers, who had enjoyed all the best business, before the Revolution, were now thrown out of the ranks of the profession by an act of the legislature, and Whig lawyers of any standing or promise were, at the moment, extremely few. Burr's engaging manner, distinguished origin, indefatigable devotion to business, and honorable fame, would, in any circumstances, have rendered his advancement in the profession certain and rapid. But in the actual state of things, they obtained for him in a very few months as profitable a business as was enjoyed by any lawyer in the State. Before he had been in practice three months, he felt so sure of his position and so satisfied with his prospects, that there seemed no longer any necessity for delaying his marriage.

That Colonel Burr, the most rising young man in the State of New York, handsome, fascinating, well-born, and famous, whose addresses few maidens in the country would have been inclined to repulse, should have chosen to marry a widow ten years older than himself, with two rollicking boys (one of them eleven years old), with precarious health, and no great estate, was a circumstance which seems to have been incomprehensible to his friends at the time, as it has since proved a

puzzle to the writers of biographical gossip. Upon the theory that Burr *was* the artful devil he has been said to be, all whose ends and aims were his own advancement, no man can explain such a marriage. Before the Revolution he had refused, point-blank, to address a young lady of fortune, whom his uncle, Thaddeus Burr, incessantly urged upon his attention. During the Revolution he was on terms of intimacy with all the great families of the State—the Clintons, the Livingstons, the Schuylers, the Van Rensselaers, and the rest; alliance with either of whom gave a young man of only aver age abilities, immense advantages in a State which was, to a singular extent, under the dominion of great families. But no considerations of this kind could break the spell which drew him, with mysterious power, to the cottage at remote and rural Paramus.

The lady was *not* beautiful. Besides being past her prime, she was slightly disfigured by a scar on her forehead. It was the graceful and winning manners of Mrs. Prevost that first captivated the mind of Colonel Burr. She was, indeed, in all respects, an estimable lady, affectionate, accomplished, well-versed in literature, and as much given to the practice as averse to the profession of piety. But it was in her character of LADY and woman of the world that she proved so irresistably pleasing to him on their first acquaintance. He used, in after years, to say, that in style and manners, she was without a peer among all the women he had known, and that if his own manners were in any respects superior to those of men in general, it was owing to the insensible influence of hers. The reader may, perhaps, have observed that young men of spirit and intelligence, who have been brought up in the severe, un gracious way of the stricter Puritans, are sometimes too keenly susceptible of the charm of manner, and are apt to attach to it an excessive importance.

But a more lasting charm of this lady was her cultivated mind. Burr was a lover of books, a lover of pictures, a lover of every thing which distinguishes man from the Puritan; and it was rare, indeed, in those days, to find a lady in America who had the kind of culture which sympathizes with such

tastes. In Europe, women were only beginning to emerge from the gross ignorance which was thought to be their proper condition; and in America, if they were not ignorant, few had the knowledge interesting to a man like Burr. Among his own female relatives there was penetrating and brilliant intellect enough; but how perverted, how repressed! Some of the most renowned ladies of the time, with a thousand virtues, scarcely ever looked into a book. Mrs. Putnam was mighty at the spinning-wheel; Mrs. Washington (as we lately learn from Mrs. Kirkland's pleasant pages) was a devotee of the knitting-needle; and the wife of another famous general was not a little proud of her patchwork quilts. Burr had met few ladies, in his earlier life, who, like Mrs. Prevost, were familiar with the most recent expressions of European intellect, who could talk intelligently with him about Voltaire, Rousseau, and Chesterfield, and could appreciate those authors without becoming their disciples. It was not mere compliment, when Burr told Mrs. Prevost that it was from knowing her that he had first learned to believe in the understanding of woman.

The two sons of Mrs. Prevost, so far from being regarded by Colonel Burr as an obstacle to his marriage, were really an inducement to it. He inherited his father's passion for training the young. He was not merely fond of children, but took the liveliest possible interest in their education. There was no period in all his long life when he had not a protegé under training. His system of education was, indeed, with all its merits, and with all the pains he bestowed in applying it, *fatally* defective; as was his own system of life. But that he took a most real and ardent interest and delight in the development of the youthful character, and spared no pains in promoting what he thought to be the right education of his protegés, there can be no doubt whatever. With a Saxon moral character, Aaron Burr might have been a schoolmaster of unheard-of excellence — such as the world waits for Nothing, indeed, was more natural to him than the tone of the instructor. Some months before he was married he con

cludes one of his letters to Mrs. Prevost in language which illustrates what I mean:

"You wrote me too much by Dom. I hope it was not from a fear that I should be dissatisfied with less. It is, I confess, rather singular to find fault with the quantity, when matter and manner are so delightful. You must, however, deal less in sentiments, and more in ideas. Indeed, in the letter in answer to my last, you will need to be particularly attentive to this injunction. I think constantly of the approaching change in our affairs, and what it demands. Do not let us, like children, be so taken with the prospect as to lose sight of the means. Remember to write me facts and ideas, and don't torment me with compliments, or yourself with sentiments to which I am already no stranger. Write but little, and very little at once."

In another letter he recommends her to buy one of the new Franklin stoves, and suggests the room in which it should be placed. After enlarging, in a style not common in love letters, upon the various good qualities of the stoves, and telling her that, as her little boy would be certain to burn himself at least once with it, it might be best to teach him the danger by slightly burning him, he concludes as follows:

"I confess I have still some transient distrusts that you set too little value on your own life and comfort. Remember, it is not yours alone; but your letters shall convince me. I waive the subject. I am not certain I shall be regularly punctual in writing you in this manner every day when I get at business; but I shall, if possible, devote one quarter of an hour a day to you. In return, I demand one half of an hour every day from you; more I forbid, unless on special occasions. This half hour is to be *mine*, to be invariably at the same time, and, for that purpose, fixed at an hour least liable to interruption, and as you shall find most convenient. Mine can not be so regular, as I only indulge myself in it when I am fatigued with business. The children will have each their sheet, and, at the given hour, write, if but a single word. *Burr*, at this half hour, is to be a kind of watchword."

While Burr was preparing for his examination, his slave

Carlos was going very frequently between Paramus and Albany, bearing letters and gifts. His letters were mostly in the decisive, commanding manner of the extracts just given, though sufficiently tender and considerate. A notorious calumniator has recently, in a work of great pretensions, insinuated that Colonel Burr, during this winter in Albany, lived on terms of scandalous intimacy with his landlady. The statement is false. Soon after his arrival in Albany, Burr was called upon by Mr. Van Rensselaer, the head of the distinguished family of that name. The two young men soon became intimate. Van Rensselaer was dissatisfied with Burr's lodgings, and in a spirit of friendliness and hospitality offered to find him better. Burr soon wrote to Mrs. Prevost that Van Rensselaer had succeeded perfectly to his wish. "I am with two maiden aunts of his," he said, "obliging and (incredible!) good-natured, the very paragons of neatness. Not an article of furniture, even to a tea-kettle, that would soil a muslin handkerchief. I have two upper rooms." In these apartments it was that he daily wrote such words as the following to a lady with whom he was anticipating a speedy marriage: "Though I write very little, it is still half my business; for whenever I find myself either at a loss what to do, or any how discomposed or dull, I fly to these sheets, and even if I do not write, I ponder upon it, and in this way sacrifice many hours without reflecting that time passes away."

On the 2d of July, 1782, by the Rev. David Bogart, of the Reformed Dutch church, Aaron Burr and Theodosia Prevost were married. They were forthwith established in an ample residence at Albany, where Colonel Burr relieved the monotony of business by assisting in the education of the two boys. One of the first uses he made of his new dignity of householder was to give a temporary home to a friend who was in love, and had a project of marriage which it was necessary for some reason to conceal. That friend was the well-known Major Popham, who was married at Colonel Burr's house, and who, fifty-four years after, held the pall which covered Burr's remains as they were borne to the grave.

Carlos made no more hurried journeys to Paramus. The charm of the "Hermitage" had departed from it. It may interest some readers to learn that traditions of the old house, and of the family who inherited it, still exist in the vicinity. Some of the walls of the house are standing, and serve as part of a modern structure. Some relics of its elegant contents, a picture, among other things, adorn a neighboring tavern. Stories of the grand company that used to assemble at the Hermitage are vaguely told by the older inhabitants; and descendants of Mrs. Prevost reside a few miles from the old estate, in an elegant abode, which contains interesting memorials of the olden time.

At Albany, in the first year of his marriage, was born Colonel Burr's only legitimate child, a daughter, whom he named Theodosia. She had a joyful welcome into the world, the beautiful child who was to have so terrible an exit from it. A father, ever fond, if not ever wise, received to his arms the infant who was to be to him so much more than a daughter, when her indomitable fidelity was all that linked him to the family of man.

Colonel Burr practiced law in Albany for more than eighteen months, with the greatest success possible in the circumstances of the time. As soon as peace was declared, he made arrangements for removing to New York. A house was hired for him in Maiden Lane, at two hundred pounds a year, the "rent to commence when the troops leave the city." That event, as New Yorkers are still annually reminded by parades and festivities, occurred on the 25th of November, 1783; soon after which date Colonel Burr removed his family to the city and began his career as a New York lawyer.

The preparatory period of Colonel Burr's life was now completely past. As a finished man and practiced lawyer he enters upon the new scene to contend with his equals for the honors of his profession and the prizes of society. Up to the present time his character and conduct have appeared only in an honorable light, because only the qualities in which he really excelled have been exhibited—his courage, his activity, his generosity, his address. John Adams testifies of him that

he came out of the revolutionary war "with the character of a knight, without fear, and an able officer," and the fact that so many excellent and discerning gentlemen admired and loved him, and that so many amiable ladies were his friends, is confirmatory of the assertion. I am convinced that society had nothing serious to charge him with up to the time of his joining the bar of this city. I am sure he had not been "profligate." The probabilities are in favor of the opinion that he had not yet had one amour of a criminal kind, nor incurred an obligation which he had not discharged.

It is important to bear this in mind, for the instructive and impressive moral of his story depends upon its truth. They who describe good men to be faultless, and bad men as devils, rob mankind of the benefit of their example. The good example discourages, and the bad one does not alarm us. We despair of imitating the one, and are not in the least afraid of coming to resemble the other. But when a good man is truly delineated, every one sees the simplicity and attainableness of goodness, and how many faults a man may have, and yet his character be essentially just and noble. How encouraging this to a youth who has sense enough to be conscious of his faults, and who aspires to emulate the sublime characters of history. So of bad men. When their characters are *truly* drawn, we are more likely to be surprised at the number of good qualities they possessed, than horrified at their bad ones. And this is, in truth, of all the facts in the case, the most appalling! That a man may be *so* good, and yet not GOOD; that he may come so near excellence, and yet so fatally miss it; that he may be so little removed in moral quality from many who pass the ordeal of life with little reproach, and yet incur so deep a damnation—these are the facts which move and scare us when we know aright and fully the men who figure in history as atrocious characters. Carlyle's delineation of Robespierre is the finest example, perhaps, of this correct portrayal of a bad man's character that has been given to the world. The frightened reader, as he closes the awful story, has no maledictions for the wretched tyrant; but sighing, says, "*I, too, might have been a Robespierre.*"

Youth is the lovely robe beneath which the character is concealed while it forms; or it is the flower which precedes the fruit, and which is often as beautiful on the tree that is going to bear ill fruit, or none, as upon that which will yellow the plain with its abundant golden showers.

CHAPTER X.

AT THE NEW YORK BAR.

New York in 1783 — John Adams's Impressions of the City — The Different kinds of Lawyers — Burr's Quality and Habits as a Lawyer — Anecdotes — Hamilton and Burr at the Bar — Emoluments of the Bar then — The Tastes and Home of Burr — Scenes at Richmond Hill.

Colonel Burr had removed to what we should now call a small town.

From 1722, when Jonathan Edwards had been accustomed to go out beyond the suburbs of New York to the banks of "Hudson's river," and meditate with ecstacy upon the deep things of his theology, to 1783, when his grandson moved down from Albany to his fine house in Maiden Lane, to practice law in the liberated city, was a period of sixty-one years, during which New York had increased in population from eight thousand to twenty-five thousand. It was the second city in the United States, Philadelphia having a population nearly twice as numerous. The State of New York, at that time, had less than three hundred thousand inhabitants, about a third of the number which now the city alone contains. In the year 1800, the city could only number sixty thousand inhabitants, and the State about half a million. The contractedness of Burr's sphere of labor it is necessary to bear in mind.

When John Adams made his triumphal progress from Boston to Philadelphia to attend the first Congress, he stopped a few days in New York, which he then saw for the first time, and described in his Diary. He says that he walked to every part of the city in one afternoon, and after seeing every thing in it worthy of a stranger's attention, went to the Coffee House and read the newspapers. His remarks, however, indi-

cate the wealth of the city. He speaks of the elegant country seats on the island; of the Broad Way, a fine street, very wide, and in a right line from one end to the other of the city; of the magnificent new church then building, which was to cost twenty thousand pounds; of the new hospital, a fine structure of stone; of a ship-yard, where a Dutch East India ship of eight hundred tons was building; of the "beautiful ellipsis of land, railed in with solid iron, in the center of which is a statue of his majesty on horseback, very large, of solid lead, gilded with gold, on a pedestal of marble, very high." The streets of the town, he adds, are "vastly more regular and elegant than those in Boston, and the houses are more grand, as well as neat. They are almost all painted, brick buildings and all."

In the course of a day or two, the observant and plain-spoken patriot had an opportunity of seeing the interior of one of the elegant country seats, near "Hudson's river." From what he says of the sumptuosity of his entertainment, we may infer that then, as now, the New Yorkers were profuse and ostentatious in their style of living. "A more elegant breakfast, I never saw," he writes; "rich plate, a very large silver coffee-pot, a very large silver tea-pot, napkins of the very finest materials, toast, and bread and butter, in great perfection. After breakfast, a plate of beautiful peaches, another of pears, and a muskmelon, were placed on the table." Napkins and silver plate, in 1774, were rare luxuries in all but the very highest circles of European nobility. The rich furniture of the New York houses excited the continual wonder of the honest Bostonian; but the people of the city pleased him not. "With all the opulence and splendor of this city," says he, "there is very little good-breeding to be found. We have been treated with an assiduous respect but I have not seen one real gentleman, one well-bred man, since I came to town. At their entertainments there is no conversation that is agreeable; there is no modesty, no attention to one another. They talk very loud, very fast, and all together. If they ask you a question, before you can utter three words of your answer, they will break out upon you

again, and talk away." New York strikes the Bostonian of to-day very much as it did John Adams in 1774.

The Revolution did not essentially change the character of the place, nor, as I conjecture, much retard its progress in wealth. But when the British troops evacuated the city, many of the wealthiest Tory families, all the British officials, and, indeed, most of those who had been regarded as the "society," of the town went with them, leaving it more exclusively a commercial city than it was. When we read in the letters and memoirs of the time allusions to the fascination of Colonel Burr's manners, and of the great things he accomplished merely by the charm of his address, we should, perhaps, attribute part of the effects to the general absence of personal style in the people. The honest, kindly, unornamental class of men were those over whom his sway was most absolute; and it was in a bustling, trading town, that he ran the brilliant part of his career.

Nor had he many competitors for the higher business of his profession. The history of the American bar remains unwritten, though the subject, to a writer able to handle it, presents unrivaled capabilities. We are left, therefore, to conjecture the strength of the legal profession when Burr rose to eminence in it. John Adams, in the part of his amusing Diary just referred to, speaks of two or three lawyers in the city to whom he was introduced, and whom he mentions as persons of importance. One of the handsome houses that adorned "the Broad Way," was pointed out to him as the residence of the famous lawyer "Mr. Smith," and it was Mr. Scott, "an eminent lawyer," whose "very large silver tea-pot" and "very large silver coffee-pot," excited Mr. Adams's astonishment. It is very evident that the law was a lucrative and important profession in New York before the Revolution. It is equally certain that the disfranchisement of all the Tory lawyers, and the complicated suits growing out of the laws confiscating the estates of Tories, gave to an able and active lawyer, just after the Revolution, a most productive field of exertion. Aaron Burr was a man to improve such an opportunity. He came here a practiced lawyer. His name and

lineage were of vast use to him. The memory of President Burr was fragrant in the adjacent States; and wherever men and women in those days were trying to live nobly, the name of Jonathan Edwards was a name of power, a name honorable and august. Hamilton and Adams both testify that, as well in politics as in law, the celebrity of Burr's father and grandfather contributed powerfully to his early success. Yet in later times we often find other leading federalists sneering at him as a man without connections; and nothing could more clearly prove the ignorance which prevailed in that party of the country they aspired to govern. As New England understood the word, no man had *such* connections as he. Scarcely a family in that country but would have esteemed it an honor to receive under their roof the descendant of Jonathan Edwards and President Burr.

Colonel Burr came to New York, apparently, with no intention to take any part in politics. As soon as the British had left the city, there was high excitement among the leading citizens relative to the offices which were to be filled. The State government had been organized long ago, and George Clinton was governor. But the city, remaining in the possession of the enemy, had deprived the governor of his choicest patronage, which now was to be bestowed, all at once, upon long-expectant Whigs. Some influential friends at Albany, who had a great opinion of Colonel Burr's talents for the dispatch of business, urged him to apply for an appointment in the city. He said, in reply, that he was unwilling to be a competitor with any gentleman for an office. Then, said Judge Bogart, you must be contented with the character of a private gentleman, for there are long lists of applicants for all the offices in the city and county of New York. And a private gentleman he remained. The steps by which he was gradually drawn from the exclusive pursuit of his profession to mingle in political strife, will be narrated in a subsequent chapter. It is convenient now to regard him only as a lawyer, in which character he chiefly presents himself during the first eight years of his residence in New York. True, he served for two sessions, those of 1784 and 1785, in the State legisla-

ture; but he attended the chamber only at important crises From 1783 until 1791, the practice of the law absorbed the greater part of his time and attention. He was an ambitious man, then as always. But, until the formation of the general government in 1789, what was there in politics to excite desire in a man of ability?

Aaron Burr, a soldier by nature, a lawyer from necessity, was the same man at the bar as he had been in the field, and conducted a suit precisely on the principles which he had applied to the capture of a fort, and the defense of the Westchester lines.

Lawyers may, perhaps, be divided into three classes. To the first belong the great souls, who love justice, and who love law as the means by which justice is done. Of such lawyers, few everywhere, the American bar can boast, at least, its fair proportion. The second class comprises the majority of practitioners, whose single consideration it is to serve their clients by all the means which the bar stamps legitimate. If they triumph, it is well, whether justice triumphs with them or not, whether their triumph is due to a recognized legal trick, or to a right interpretation of the law. The third class are simply unscrupulous. They hang upon the outskirts of the profession and prey upon its offal. It is their trade to assist, to protect, and to deliver villains. To be a lawyer of the first description, and to excel in it, demands a broad, comprehensive, noble UNDERSTANDING. The second class requires a quick, acute intellect, tact, adroitness, self-possession, and great physical stamina, together with a certain moral obtuseness, which enables a man to do in his professional, what he would not do in his private capacity. The third kind of lawyer is merely a scoundrel, cunning enough to obtain the rewards of crime without incurring its risks.

To a place among the greatest lawyers, Aaron Burr has no title. He had not weight of metal enough for that. He was a light person; tough, elastic, polished, penetrating, a perfect rapier, not a broadsword; successful, while he did rapier's work, failing when a heavier blade was needed in his place. As a lawyer of the second grade, *as a mere practitioner at the*

bar, I presume his equal never lived. In his hands, the law was a whole armory of weapons, in the use of which, as weapons, his daring was only equaled by his skill.

In preparing his causes for trial, he was simply indefatigable. While there was an authority to be examined, while there was evidence to be procured, while there was an expedient to be devised, his efforts were never relaxed. And he gave no rest to his adversary, pursuing him with notices, motions, and appeals, improving every advantage, and exhausting all the means of annoyance; until, from very weariness and despair, sometimes, the enemy has capitulated. Colonel Burr not only labored himself to the uttermost of the powers of man, but he had the art of exacting from his assistants an equal diligence. There was no resisting his requirements. Assistant-counsel would receive notes from him at midnight, when they were asleep, demanding instant replies, which obliged the drowsy men of law to refer to authorities and examine papers. On the day of trial, he had his evidence, arguments, and authorities, marshaled in impenetrable array. Every possibility had been provided for. No man at the bar could ever boast of discovering a flaw in his preparation, or of carrying a point against him by surprise.

Where no amount of legitimate preparation would avail, he had no scruples to employing a legal *ruse*. Indeed he delighted to *surprise* his adversary, to lay an ambuscade for him, and carry a case by an ingenious stroke before the other side could recover their self-possession. It is related, that, in an ejectment suit to recover a valuable house in New York, the opposing counsel had expended their whole strength in proving the genuineness of a will, supposing, of course, that that was the only point susceptible of dispute. What was their surprise to find, that Burr's main attack was against the authenticity of an ancient deed, one of the links in the title, which, having never before been disputed, had been provided with merely formal proof! The jury pronounced the deed a forgery, and Burr's client lived and died in possession of the property. Two courts have since pronounced the deed authentic.

No means were too trival for him to employ, if he thought

them likely to promote his purpose He used to say that he had once saved a man from being hanged by a certain arrangement of the candles in a court room. He referred to a trial for murder, in which both Hamilton and himself defended the prisoner, and which excited intense interest at the time. At first, the evidence against the prisoner seemed conclusive, and, I think, Burr himself thought him guilty. But as the trial proceeded, suspicions arose against the principal witness. Colonel Burr subjected him to a relentless cross-examination, and he became convinced that the guilt lay between the witness and the prisoner, with the balance of probability against the witness.

The man's appearance and bearing were most unprepossessing. Besides being remarkably ugly, he had the mean, *down* look, which is associated with the timidity of guilt. Hamilton had addressed the jury with his usual fluent eloquence, confining his remarks to the vindication of the prisoner, without alluding to the probable guilt of the witness. The prosecuting attorney replied, and it was now Burr's province to say the last word for the prisoner. But the day had worn away, and the court took a recess till candle light. This was extremely annoying to Colonel Burr, as he meditated enacting a little scene, to the success of which a strong light was indispensable. He was not to be balked, however. Through one of his satellites, of whom he always had several revolving around him, he caused an extra number of candles to be brought into the court-room, and to be so arranged as to throw a strong light upon a certain pillar, in full view of the jury, against which the suspected witness had leaned throughout the trial. The court assembled, the man resumed his accustomed place, and Colonel Burr rose. With the clear conciseness of which he was master, he set forth the facts which bore against the man, and then, seizing two candelabras from the table, he held them up toward him, throwing a glare of light upon his face, and exclaimed,

"Behold the murderer, gentlemen!"

Every eye was turned upon the wretch's ghastly countenance, which, to the excited multitude, seemed to wear the

very expression of a convicted murderer. The man reeled, as though he had been struck; then shrunk away behind the crowd, and rushed from the room. The effect of this incident was decisive. Colonel Burr concluded his speech, the judge charged, the jury gave a verdict of acquittal, and the prisoner was free.

A ruse which he once played on General Hamilton, Burr related to a legal friend, who told it to me. It occurred early in his practice at the New York bar, when he and Hamilton were in the first flush of success, and neither was disposed to concede superiority to the other. Both were engaged, for the first time, on the same side of an important cause, and it was a question which of the two should first address the jury. The etiquette of the bar assigns the closing speech to the leader of a cause, but it was not clear in this case who was the leader. Hamilton, who was certainly not an excessively modest man, hinted, in a rather ungracious manner, as Burr thought, that his friend Colonel Burr would open the argument. With that imperturbable politeness that never forsook him, Burr assented to the arrangement without a word of objection. He was nettled, however, and hit upon a little scheme of harmless revenge. He knew well the character of Hamilton's mind, and, from repeated conversations with him on the cause in which they were engaged, he knew every point which Hamilton would be likely to make in his speech. Burr prepared himself with great care. When he came at length to address the jury, besides using his own arguments, he anticipated all of Hamilton's. He absolutely exhausted the case. There was nothing left for Hamilton to advance. The consequence was that that gentleman appeared to much less advantage than usual, and never afterward exhibited an undue desire to assume the place of honor in suits which he conducted conjointly with Colonel Burr.

A few of Burr's maxims respecting the practice of the law have been preserved. His sarcastic definition of law, as dealt out by courts, has been often quoted to his disadvantage. "Law," said he, "is whatever is boldly asserted and plausibly maintained." Whether the sarcasm is, or was deserved, let

lawyers decide. Another of his sayings related to the management of a case, after the enemy had proposed to capitulate. Until that point was reached, he was for giving them no rest. But when a proposition for compromise had been received, he would say, "Now move slowly, never negotiate in a hurry." But the best of all his observations, at least, the most striking and novel, was the following: "There is a maxim," said he, "'Never put off till to-morrow what you can do to-day.' This is a maxim for sluggards. A better reading of it is, *Never do to-day what you can as well do to-morrow;* because something may occur to make you regret your premature action." He used also, to say, that the art of using men consisted in placing each in the position he was best fitted for; a version of the recent phrase, "The right man for the right place."

He showed unequaled tact himself in placing his men. Before selecting his assistants in a cause, he would ascertain and carefully calculate all the opposing influences—prejudice, interest, indifference, ignorance, political, local, and family feeling—and choose the men likeliest to combat them with effect. If there was a *crank* in the mind of a judge, he would find the hand that could turn it to his advantage. If there was a prejudice in the mind of a jury, he would contrive, by some means, to bring it to bear in favor of his client. If learning and eloquence were essential, he would enlist their aid also. But his forte was in playing upon the amiable weaknesses of human nature. Above these, the great man lifts his hearers; for the time, *makes* them noble and reasonable; and while they are so, convinces them. To Aaron Burr this majestic kind of mastery over men was not given.

As in the battle-field, so in the crises of a suit, his composure was perfect. The most unexpected event could not startle him. One day, as he and two other lawyers were arguing, in the court of chancery, a case in which he appeared for a very intimate friend of many years' standing, and in which he himself had an interest, a letter was handed him by a messenger. Apologizing, and requesting the lawyers to proceed in

their debate, he opened the letter, read it carefully, and then, quite in his usual manner, refolded it, and laid it on the table with the address downward. The discussion proceeded for bout ten minutes longer. Colonel Burr listened with his usual attention, and, when a pause occurred, asked in his gentlest and quietest tone, as if merely to solve a legal doubt which had casually risen in his mind, "What effect would the death of my client have on the suit?" The lawyers started, and eagerly inquired his reason for asking. "He is dead," replied Burr, "as I learn from this letter; will the suit abate?"

From the strictness of his practice, he has been called a legal martinet. He asked no favors, and granted none. He defied an opponent to catch *him* tripping, and he never failed to subject his opponent's argument to just such treatment as he had taken infinite pains to guard his own against. So fond was he of the technicalities of the law, that occasionally he indulged in them to the detriment of his client. At the same time, no man was more observant of the proper courtesies of the bar; like a true knight, all complaisance, till the lists were joined, and the signal given for the fight; then the time had come for hard blows and rapid thrusts.

Burr valued himself little upon his oratorical powers, and he used to say that he had seldom spoken with pleasure or satisfaction to himself. His pleadings at the bar were more in the style of conversation than oratory, it is said; the conversation, however, of a well-bred, thoroughly-informed man of the world. He never declaimed. He was never diffuse; a long speech he never delivered in his life. In concise, precise, and, therefore, simple language, he contrived to clothe the essential points of his argument, and to lodge them in the mind of judge and jury so firmly that no bursts of eloquence from the other side could remove them. There was a vein of quiet sarcasm in some of his speeches, which, it is said, wa exceedingly effective. With a manner always serious, he occasionally rose to be impressive, and produced effects upon the minds of his hearers that were long remembered. It is certain, from the writings of the time, that he was regarded as

a great speaker; as great in his way as General Hamilton was in his; and it was said that the extremely interesting character of Burr's speeches, no less than their conciseness, made it difficult to report them. The courtliness of his manner, the air of perfect breeding that invested him, and the singular composure of his bearing, all contributed, doubtless, to the effect of his public addresses. From the traditions still preserved in old Presbyterian families respecting the eloquence of President Burr, I infer that the son's style of speaking was extremely like that of the father.

To Alexander Hamilton, his friend and rival, Colonel Burr freely conceded the palm of eloquence. He did justice to the powers of that able man, with whom he contended for the honors of his profession and the prizes of public life, for twenty years. To the strength and fertility of Hamilton's imagination, to his fine rhetorical powers, to his occasional flashes of poetical genius, and to the force of his declamation, Colonel Burr paid the tribute of admiration. The two men were antagonists by nature; but, during these happy years, each had a high, if not an exaggerated opinion of the other's talents.

An aged member of the bar described to me the manner of the two men in their public addresses. Hamilton's way was to *exhaust* a case; giving ample statement to every point; anticipating every objection; saying every thing that could fairly be said in the fullest manner. He would speak for two or three hours, enchaining the attention of court and jury by his fluent and, sometimes, lofty eloquence. Burr, in replying, would select two or three vulnerable, yet vital points of Hamilton's speech, and quietly demolish them, and leave all the other parts of his oration untouched. In a twenty minutes' speech, he has been known completely to neutralize the effect of one of Hamilton's elaborate and ornate addresses. Burr began practice upon the principle of never undertaking a cause which he did not feel sure of gaining; and I am assured by another venerable lawyer of this city, who was frequently engaged with Burr, that he never in his life lost a case which he personally conducted. It is, at least, certain,

that he gained over Hamilton some signal and unexpected triumphs.*

On his arrival in New York, Colonel Burr seems, at once, to have taken his place among the leaders of the bar, and he retained that position for nearly a quarter of a century, though, during that period, the bar of New York trebled its numbers. With the single exception of Hamilton, no lawyer in the State held so high a position as he, and none in the country held a higher.

With regard to the income derivable from the practice of the law at that time, it is difficult to obtain information. At the present day, a lawyer is considered to be in good practice who has a clear gain of four thousand dollars a year. Ten thousand dollars is thought a very large revenue: it is questionable if there are one hundred lawyers in the United States who earn so much. An *average* income of twenty thousand is as great as the half dozen leading lawyers of the country can boast; though, occasionally, a lawyer will make that sum by a single case, or even twice as much. In early times, professional incomes could scarcely have been as large as they are now. Among the letters of Alexander Hamilton there is one from a New York merchant, retaining the services of Hamilton in any suits the merchant might have for five years. Inclosed in the letter was a note for a thousand dollars, payable at the end of the five years, with interest at five per cent.

* General Erastus Root, who was well acquainted with Burr in the height of his celebrity, was with him in the Assembly and in Congress, and often heard him speak in the courts, gives the following opinion of the powers of the two men: "As a lawyer and as a scholar Burr was not inferior to Hamilton. His reasoning powers were at least equal. Their *modes* of argument were very different. Hamilton was very diffuse and wordy. His words were so well chosen, and his sentences so finely formed into a swelling current, that the hearer would be captivated. The listener would admire, if he was not convinced. Burr's arguments were generally methodized and compact. I used to say of them, when they were rivals at the bar, that Burr would say as much in half an hour as Hamilton in two hours. Burr was terse and convincing, while Hamilton was flowing and rapturous. They were much the greatest men in this State, and perhaps the greatest men in the United States."—*Hammond's History of Political Parties in the State of New York*

Upon the letter is an indorsement, in Hamilton's hand, to the effect that the note had been "*returned, as being too much.*" Certainly the present leaders of the New York bar would not take so modest a view of the value of their services. William Wirt, of Virginia, a very brilliant and successful lawyer, practicing in the dominant State of the Union, mentions, that in 1802, he had an income of twelve hundred pounds a year. A few years later, while passing through New York to try a cause in Boston, he visited some of the New York courts, and inquired respecting the fees of the lawyers. He was astonished at their *smallness*, and said a Virginia lawyer would starve on such fees. From such indications as these, it is perhaps safe to infer that Hamilton and Burr may have had professional incomes of ten thousand dollars a year, but not more, on an average. Burr used to say that he had made forty thousand dollars from one cause, but whether it was as a lawyer or a speculator that he gained so much, is not clear. Speculation in lands was much the rage among the leading men of the country during the first twenty years after the Revolution, and no one was fonder of that fascinating game than Burr. Frequently he united, in his land transactions, the characters of lawyer and of speculator, receiving lands in payment for professional services, and then disposing of them to the best advantage he could.

His style of living kept pace with his increasing income. In a few years we find him master of Richmond Hill, the mansion where Washington had lived in 1776, with grounds reaching to the Hudson, with ample gardens, and a considerable extent of grove and farm. Here he maintained a liberal establishment, and exercised the hospitality which was then in vogue. Talleyrand, Volney, Louis Philippe, and other strangers of distinction, whom the French Revolution drove into exile, were entertained with princely profusion and elegance at Richmond Hill. With Talleyrand and Volney, Burr became particularly intimate. The one particular in which Richmond Hill surpassed the other houses of equal pretensions, was its library. From his college days, Colonel Burr had been a zealous buyer of books, and his stock had gone on increasing

till, on attaining to the dignity of householder, he was able to give to his miscellaneous collection something of the completeness of a library. It was customary then for gentlemen to have accounts with booksellers in London, and the arrival of the English packet was an event of interest to persons of taste from the literary treasures it usually brought. Colonel Burr was one of those who had their London bookseller; to whom he was an excellent customer. It is evident enough, from his correspondence, that his favorite authors were still those whom the "well-constituted minds" of that day regarded with admiring horror. The volumes of Gibbon's History were appearing in those years, striking the orthodox world with wonder and dismay. They had a very hearty welcome in the circle at Richmond Hill. Colonel Burr read them, and often, while absent from home at some distant court, reminds his wife of their excellence, and urges her to study them with care. Indeed, Gibbon was an author quite after Aaron Burr's own heart.

Another name of horror, a few years later, was William Godwin (Charles Lamb's friend), the most amiable of the human species, and, one would *now* suppose, the most harmless. He was one of those lovers of his kind who believe in man as saints once believed in God. A passionate lover of justice, a passionate hater of wrong, he waged a well-meant, ineffectual warfare against the State of Things. He held opinions respecting the Rights of Woman, Marriage and Divorce, and the Administration of Justice, which are peculiarly obnoxious to persons of a conservative cast of character. Burr liked this man and his writings. In one of the letters in which Hamilton recounts the enormities of Burr, he says, by way of climax, that he had heard him talk *rank Godwinism!* Of Mary Wolstoncroft, the wife of William Godwin, Burr had an exquisite portrait among his few pictures.

Jeremy Bentham was another of his favorites. At a time when the mere name of the great Apostle of Utilitarianism was known only to half a dozen of the most intelligent minds on this side of the Atlantic, Colonel Burr was a reader of his works, and conceived for their author the highest opinion

Benthamism has had its day; it only excites wonder in us now that so estimable a man should have found delight in such dreary doctrine; but it is certain that to be a reader of Bentham during the period now under consideration, was to be a partaker of the most advanced thought of the time. Benthamism was, as a great critic has remarked, "a *determinate being*, what all the world, in a cowardly, half-and-half manner, was tending to be." "An eyeless heroism," the same writer styles it. Along with Burr, Albert Gallatin was a lover of Bentham; and it is likely enough that Burr derived his first knowledge of Bentham through Gallatin.

The "Edinburg Review," Scott's early poems, the Mackenzie's and Miss Burnett's novels, in a word, all the attractive literature of the day, found its way, very soon after publication, to Richmond Hill.

What happy years were those which Colonel Burr passed in the practice of the law in New York, before he was drawn into the political vortex! His wife was full of affection and helpfulness, making him the happiest of men while he was at home, and superintending, with wise vigilance, his office and his household when he was abroad. Her two sons were students at law in Colonel Burr's office, and aided him most essentially in the prosecution of his business. One of them frequently accompanied him on his journeys as an amanuensis and clerk, while the other represented him in the office in New York. Little Theodosia, a lovely, rosy-cheeked child, all grace and intelligence, was the delight of the household. The letters that passed between Colonel Burr and his wife, after they had been several years married, read like the passionate outpourings of Italian lovers in the first month of their betrothal.

Once, in telling him of the safe arrival of a packet of his letters, she draws an enchanting picture of a happy home. It was just before dinner, she says, when the letters arrived, and the children were dispersed at various employments. "I furnished the mantelpiece with the contents of the packet. When dinner was served up they were called. You know the usual eagerness on this occasion. They were all seated but Barlow,

when he espied the letters; the surprise, the joy, the exclamations exceed description. The greatest stoic would have forgot himself. A silent tear betrayed me no *philosopher*. A most joyous repast succeeded. We talked of our happiness, of our first of blessings, our best of papas. I enjoyed, my Aaron, the only happiness that could accrue from your absence. It was a momentary compensation; the only one I ever experienced." Then she tells him how happy his letter had made her. "Your letters," she adds, "always afford me a singular satisfaction; a sensation entirely my own; this was peculiarly so. It wrought strangely on my mind and spirits. My Aaron, it was replete with tenderness! with the most lively affection. I read and re-read, till afraid I should get it by rote, and mingle it with common ideas. Profane the sacred pledge! No; it shall not be. I will economize the boon."

In another letter she describes the inane behavior of some foolish guests with whom the family had been bored, and tells him how rejoiced she was to observe that the children all had sense enough to despise them. "I really believe, my dear," she proceeds, "that few parents can boast of children whose minds are so prone to virtue. I see the reward of our assiduity with inexpressible delight, with a gratitude few experience. My Aaron, they have grateful hearts; some circumstances prove it, which I shall relate to you with singular pleasure at your return."

Another passage, acknowledging the arrival of letters, is very remarkable. It was written when they had been five years married. "What language," she exclaims, "can express the joy, the gratitude of Theodosia? Stage after stage without a line. Thy usual punctuality gave room for every fear; various conjectures filled every breast. One of our sons was to have departed to-morrow in quest of the best of friends and fathers. This morning we waited the stage with impatience. Shrouder went frequently before it arrived; at length returned—*no letter*. We were struck dumb with disappointment. Bartow set out to inquire who were the passengers; in a very few minutes returned exulting—a packet worth the treasures of the universe. Joy brightened every face; all

expressed their past anxieties; their present happiness. To enjoy was the first result. Each made choice of what they could best relish. Porter, sweet wine, chocolate, and sweetmeats made the most delightful repast that could be shared without thee. The servants were made to feel *their lord was well*, are at this instant toasting his health and bounty; while the boys are obeying thy dear commands, thy Theodosia flies to speak her heartfelt joys:—her Aaron safe, mistress of the heart she adores; can she ask more? has Heaven more to grant?"

Her letters are not all in this ecstatic strain. She talks of business, of books, of passing events. Catharine of Russia was then filling the world with the noise of her exploits. Mrs. Burr writes: "The Empress of Russia is as successful as I wish her. What a glorious figure will she make on the historical page! Can you form an idea of a more happy mortal than she will be when seated on the throne of Constantinople? How her ambition will be gratified; the opposition and threats of Great Britain will increase her triumph. I wish I had wit and importance enough to write her a congratulatory letter. The ladies should deify her, and consecrate a temple to her praise. It is a diverting thought that the mighty Emperor of the Turks should be subdued by a woman. How enviable that she alone should be the avenger of her sex's wrongs for so many ages past. She seems to have awakened Justice, who appears to be a sleepy dame in the cause of injured innocence."

Colonel Burr's replies to these warm epistles are couched in the language of sincere and joyous love. Before the marriage there was a certain peremptoriness of tone in his letters to her, not usual, and not quite pleasing, in the letters of a lover. His letters after marriage were more tender, without being less considerate. A few sentences will suffice to give an idea of their usual manner.

The following is perfectly characteristic: "This morning came your kind, your affectionate, your truly welcome letter of Monday evening. Where did it loiter so long? Nothing in my absence is so flatterng to me as your health and cheer

fulness. I then contemplate nothing so eagerly as my return, amuse myself with ideas of my own happiness, and dwell on the sweet domestic joys which I fancy prepared for me. Nothing is so unfriendly to every species of enjoyment as melancholy. Gloom, however dressed, however caused, is incompatible with friendship. They can not have place in the mind at the same time. It is the secret, the malignant foe of sentiment and love."

He writes much respecting the children. "The letters of our dear children are a feast. Every part of them is pleasing and interesting. * * * To hear that they are employed, that no time is absolutely wasted, is the most flattering of any thing that can be told me of them. It insures their affection, or is the best evidence of it. It insures, in its consequences, every thing I am ambitious of in them. Endeavor to preserve regularity of hours; it conduces exceedingly to industry. * * * My love to the smiling little girl. I received her letter, but not the pretty things. I continually plan my return with childish impatience; and fancy a thousand incidents which render it more interesting."

Going to Albany was a serious undertaking in those days. From Albany, on one occasion, he writes: "The headache with which I left New York grew so extreme, that, finding it impossible to proceed in the stage, the view of a vessel off Tarrytown, under full sail before the wind, tempted me to go on board. We reached West Point that night, and lay there at anchor near three days. After a variety of changes from sloop to wagon, from wagon to canoe, and from canoe to sloop again, I reached this place last evening. I was able, however, to land at Rhinebeck on Thursday evening, and there wrote you a letter."

One of Colonel Burr's letters to his wife, written in the seventh year of their married life, gives us an idea of the playful badinage for which his conversation was remarkable, but which appears unfrequently in his letters. He had had some thoughts of buying a romantic spot, called Fort Johnson; desirable, also, as property. She, it appears, was not in favor of the purchase, and advised him not even to revisit the lovely

scene, lest he should be tempted to buy it. But he did visit it, and wrote her a very pleasant, and humorous account of the result:

"O Theo.! there is the most delightful grove—so darkened with *weeping willows*, that at noonday a *susceptible* fancy like yours would mistake it for a bewitching moonlight evening. These sympathizing willows, too, exclude even the prying eye of curiosity. Here no rude noise interrupts the softest whisper. Here no harsher sound is heard than the wild cooings of the gentle dove, the gay thrasher's animated warbles, and the soft murmurs of the passing brook. Really, Theo., it is *charming*.

"I should have told you that I am speaking of Fort Johnson, where I have spent a day. From this *amiable* bower you ascend a gentle declivity, by a winding path, to a cluster of lofty oaks and locusts. Here nature assumes a more august appearance. The gentle brook, which murmured soft below, here bursts a cataract. Here you behold the stately Mohawk roll his majestic wave along the lofty Apalachians. Here the mind assumes a nobler tone, and is occupied by sublimer objects. What *there* was tenderness, *here* swells to rapture. It is truly *charming*.

"The windings of this enchanting brook form a lovely island, variegated by the most sportive hand of nature. This shall be yours. We will plant it with jasmins and woodbine, and call it Cyprus. It seems formed for the residence of the loves and the graces, and is therefore yours by the best of titles. It is indeed most *charming*.

"But I could fill sheets in description of the beauties of this romantic place. We will reserve it for the subject of many an amusing hour. And besides being little in the habit of the sublime or poetical, I grow already out of breath, and begin to falter, as you perceive. I can not, however, omit the most interesting and important circumstance; one which I had rather communicate to you in this way than face to face. I know that you was opposed to this journey to Fort Johnson. It is, therefore, with the greatest regret that I communicate

the event; and you are not unacquainted with my inducements to it.

"In many things I am indeed unhappy in possessing a singularity of taste; particularly unhappy when that taste differs in any thing from yours. But we can not control necessity, hough we often persuade ourselves that certain things are ur choice, when in truth we have been unavoidably impelled to them. In the instance I am going to relate, I shall not examine whether I have been governed by mere fancy, or by motives of expediency, or by caprice; you will probably say the latter.

"My dear Theo., arm yourself with all your fortitude. I know you have much of it, and I hope that upon this occasion you will not fail to exercise it. I abhor preface and preamble, and don't know why I have now used it so freely. But I am well aware that what I am going to relate needs much apology *from* me, and will need much *to* you. If I am the unwilling, the unfortunate instrument of depriving you of any part of your promised gayety or pleasure, I hope you are too generous to aggravate the misfortune by upbraiding me with it. Be assured (I hope the assurance is needless), that whatever diminishes your happiness equally impairs mine. In short, then, for I grow tedious both to you and myself; and to procrastinate the relation of disagreeable events only gives them poignancy; in short, then, my dear Theo., the beauty of this same Fort Johnson, the fertility of the soil, the commodiousness and elegance of the buildings, the great value of the mills, and the very inconsiderable price which was asked for the whole, have *not* induced me to purchase it, and probably never will: in the confidence, however, of meeting your forgiveness. I am, etc., etc."

One who reads this warm and tender correspondence receives the impression that it gushed from hearts that confided in one another, and that were worthy one another's confidence. It was a very happy family. Parents, children, servants, seemed all to have delighted in one another, and to have been animated by a common desire for the happiness of the whole circle. To his two step-sons, Colonel Burr was liberal in the

extreme, and took the liveliest possible interest in their advancement. The little Theodosia was now beginning her education, every step of which was thoughtfully superintended by her father. From her earliest years, she began to manifest a singular, almost morbid fondness for her father, who, on his part, was resolved that she should be peerless among the ladies of her time. *Courage* and *fortitude* were his darling virtues. He began to teach his daughter these, at an age when most parents are teaching their children effeminacy. He would encourage her to go alone in the dark, to the least frequented parts of his large rambling house, and to sleep in a room by herself. He urged her to restrain her cries when she was hurt, and to overcome her appetite for injurious delicacies. To such an extent did he carry discipline of this kind, that visitors sometimes received the impression that he was a hard, unloving father; as people will of those rare parents who prefer to promote the lasting good of their children, even at the expense of their present pleasure. The servants of the family, most of whom were slaves, were taught to read.

In these years, there was not a spot upon the brightness of his good name. A rising lawyer, devoted to business, avoiding politics, happy at home, honored abroad, welcome in the most refined and elevated circles, and shining in them with all the luster of a striking person, graceful manners and a polished wit—who would have predicted for him any thing but a career of still increasing brilliancy, a whole life-time of honorable exertion, and a name that would have been distinction to all who bore, or should inherit it?

True, a discerning person, a *man* who should have seen him much, and observed him closely, would have noted that in much of his intercourse with others, there was a flavor of falsehood. Women he always flattered. He did it on principle. He said their ruling passion was vanity, which, he always maintained, was a harmless and amiable failing. He flattered them with an adroitness seldom equaled, contriving always to praise those qualities, upon the fancied possession of which they most valued *themselves;* which is, of all flattery, the most irresistible. But this habit was, by no means, altogether insincere

with Colonel Burr. He really liked women, and all their lovely ways, and had a great opinion of their taste and capacity. He preferred their society to that of men, at all periods of life—which is not a good sign. And women, with scarcely one exception in all his life, were warmly his friends—which is not an infallibly good sign. The men whom *men* respect, the women whom *women* approve, are the men and women who bless their species.

Burr's intercourse with men, too, was not always characterized by the heartiness and directness which are dear to the Saxon heart. He succeeded best with young men and with unsophisticated elderly gentlemen. He had a rare faculty of inspiring young men with his own ambition, and with his own contempt of danger, luxury, and ease. Many young men loved him almost with the love of woman, and made him their model, and succeeded in copying his virtues and his faults. He, on his part, was really attached to them, would take infinite pains to form and advance them; and succeeded in so imprinting his own character on theirs, that their career in life was like his—glorious at the beginning, disastrous, if not disgraceful, at the close.

The same discerning observer would have lamented Colonel Burr's carelessness with regard to money. He was excessively given to making presents, to making expensive additions to his house and grounds. His hospitality was sometimes profuse in the extreme. Once, while a certain Major Prevost was gone to England, his whole family of young children were entertained at Colonel Burr's house. There was not that instinctive counting of the cost which marks the character destined to live and die in prosperity. And, still worse, there was not that instinctive shrinking from debt, that caution not to incur obligations respecting the punctual discharge of which there is any reasonable doubt, which indicates the entirely honest man. At this period, however, this cardinal fault had not exhibited itself to a degree approaching immorality. Profuseness of expenditure was then, as now, the prevalent vice of New York, and in conforming to the bad custom Col-

onel Burr did only what most of his neighbors did. Hamilton himself, after fifteen years' successful practice of the law in the same courts with Burr, died scarcely solvent.*

* In a former edition it was stated that Rufus King was one of the public men of that day who mismanaged their private interests. This was an error. I learn that Mr. King, eminently faithful as he was to the public interests in the various high offices which he filled, was a remarkably prudent manager of his private fortune. After a lifetime of generous expenditure, he left a considerable estate to his children.

CHAPTER XI.

THE NEW YORK POLITICIAN.

The Rapidity of his Rise in Politics — Member of the State Legislature — Opposes the Mechanics' Bill — Votes for the Abolition of Slavery — Parties after the Peace — The Great Families of the State — "Burr's Myrmidons" — The Ratification of the Constitution — Burr's Early Movements in Politics — Appointed Attorney-General of the State — His Report on the Revolutionary Claims — Sale of the State Lands — Elected to the Senate of the United States.

Colonel Burr's rise to eminence in the political world was more rapid than that of any other man who has played a conspicuous part in the affairs of the United States. Over the heads of tried and able politicians, in a State where leading families had, for a century, nearly monopolized the offices of honor and emolument, he was advanced, in four years after fairly entering the political arena, from a private station, first to the highest honor of the bar, next, to a seat in the national councils, and then, to a competition with Washington, Adams, Jefferson, and Clinton for the presidency itself. This point he reached when he was but thirty-six years of age, without having originated any political idea or measure, without being fully committed to either of the two leading parties.

To his cotemporaries, no less than to recent writers of political history, the suddenness of his elevation was an enigma. John Adams thought it was owing to the prestige of his father's and grandfather's name. Hamilton attributed it to Burr's unequaled wire-pulling. Some thought it was his military reputation. Others called it luck. His own circle of friends regarded his elevation as the legitimate result of a superiority to most of his rivals in knowledge, culture, and talents. No doubt *all* of these were causes of his success. Perhaps some of the mystery will vanish before a concise statement of his political career.

Late in the autumn of 1783, Colonel Burr, as we have seen, became a resident of the city of New York. In the spring of 1784 he was elected a member of the legislature, and on the 12th of October following, took his seat. During the first session, he was not a diligent, nor, as it would seem, a prominent member; attending only when important votes were taken, and leaving the burden of legilsation to members of more leisure than himself. But, at the second session, he took a stand on a certain bill which made him at once the most conspicuous of the members, and an object, out of doors, of equal hatred and admiration.

A company of mechanics applied for an act of incorporation, by which they would be enabled to hold land to an unlimited extent, and to wield power which, Colonel Burr thought, would finally endanger the independence of the city government. A great and wealthy Guild, unless limits were fixed to its growth and authority, would arise, he said, to direct the votes of the most numerous class in the community, and thus to overawe the government. Alone, among the members from the city, he opposed this bill. His course created an intense excitement among the mechanics, some of whom threatened violence against his person and property; thus creating the circumstances in which, of all others, Aaron Burr was most fitted to shine. To danger he was constitutionally insensible. He stood firm in his opposition. When his friends offered to protect his house from assault, he adroitly said that he had no fear of violence from men of the Revolution, who had just made such sacrifices to conquer the right of governing themselves; and that, whatever might occur, he was able and prepared to protect himself. The bill passed; but was returned from the Council of Revision with Colonel Burr's objections, and was, therefore, lost. The citizens generally sided with Burr, and the mechanics themselves, it is said, were, at least, so far convinced of the correctness of his views as never to renew the application.

Conduct like this, in a young and rising lawyer, popular already for his gallantry as a soldier, could not but add to his reputation for courage, a general confidence in his firmness and

address. It was calculated to win him friends among his legislative associates, among the propertied citizens, and among the very class whose wishes he had opposed, who are not apt to like a man the less for boldly and courteously setting them right. It must also be borne in mind that a town of thirty thousand inhabitants is a theater upon which a shining action does not escape observation.

At the same session, a bill was introduced into the legislature for the gradual abolition of slavery in the State. Burr was in favor of a speedier extinction of the anomaly, and moved to amend the bill so as to totally abolish slavery after a certain day. His amendment having been rejected, he voted for the original bill, which was lost.

Then followed three years of political calm in the State of New York, during which the name of Aaron Burr does not appear in politics.

During the period that elapsed between the conclusion of peace in 1783, and the formation of the Constitution in 1787, the question upon which parties in this State were divided was this: What are the rights of the *Tories* in this commonwealth? Shall we Whigs, triumphant over them after a seven years' contest, regard them as defeated enemies or as mistaken fellow-citizens? Shall the animosities and disabilities of the war be kept up and cherished, or shall the victors magnanimously let bygones be bygones?

In this controversy, there were three parties.

First, the Tories themselves, some of whom were blind enough to think that England, after breathing awhile, would attempt, and successfully too, to regain her colonies, the lost jewels of her diadem. Others, less infatuated, hoped, that after the first soreness of the war was over, the Tories would enjoy in the State the preëminence they had had in the colony Others, disfranchised for their active hostility to the Revolution, were humble suitors for a restoration to estates and employment. All of these were, of course, for granting the Tories all the rights and privileges of citizenship.

Secondly, the Whigs, who had borne the burdens and hardships of the war; many of whom had lost fortune, health, re-

lations, friends, in the struggle; all of whom having seen that struggle prolonged and embittered by Tory machinations, had learned to hate a Tory worse than a British soldier. These men were indignant at the idea of conceding any thing to Tories. They demanded to enjoy the fruits of their triumph without sharing them with the enemy.

Thirdly, between these extreme parties, there was, as usual, a class of people who were in favor of making some concessions to the Tories, and of gradually restoring all who would profess loyalty to the new order of things, to equal privileges with the Whigs.

Colonel Burr was a Whig of the decided school, one of those who were called violent Whigs. This was the popular party of that day. That he took an open and active part in the discussion of the various Whig and Tory questions, does not appear, but he was *classed* with the extreme Whigs, and acted afterward, and on other questions, with that party.

As there were three parties, so there were three groups of leading partizans.

There were, first, the *Clintons*, of whom George Clinton, Governor of the State, was the important person. He was the undisputed leader of the popular party. He had been governor since 1777, and was re-elected, every other year, to that office, for eighteen years. The Clintons, as a family, were not, at this time, either numerous or rich; but George Clinton, an able, tough, wary, self-willed man, wielding, with unusual tact, the entire patronage of the State, and dear to the affections of the great mass of the people, is an imposing figure in the politics of the time, and must ever be regarded as the Chief Man of the State of New York, during the earlier years of its independent existence. De Witt Clinton, a nephew of the governor, was a student in Columbia College at this time. The Clintons were all strong characters, retaining something of the fiery, obstinate, north-of-Ireland disposition which their ancestor brought with him from over the sea, in 1719. They were thorough Whigs, all of them, though, it was said, the founder of the family was a royalist in the time of Charles I., and fled to Ireland to avoid the enmity of the Roundheads.

Then there were the *Schuylers*, with General Schuyler at their head, and Alexander Hamilton, his son-in-law, for ornament and champion. General Schuyler was formed for unpopularity. Rich, of an imposing presence, austere in manners, a very honest, worthy man, he had no real sympathy with the age and country in which he lived. No more had Hamilton, as Hamilton well knew, and bitterly confessed. But not to anticipate, it is enough here to say that the Schuyler party, as used and led by Alexander Hamilton, was the one most directly opposed to the Clintons. General Schuyler had been a competitor with George Clinton for the governorship in 1777, and his disappointment, it was thought, was still very fresh in the general's recollection.

But there was a third family in the State, which, merely as a family, was more important than the Clintons or Schuylers. This was the Livingston family—rich, numerous, and influential. At the time we are now considering, there were nine members of this family in public life—politicians, judges, clergymen, lawyers—of whom several were of national celebrity. And besides those who bore the name of Livingston, there were distinguished and aspiring men who had married daughters of the family. The Livingstons had been rooted in the State for more than a hundred years, and the circle of their connections embraced a great proportion of the leading people. Robert R. Livingston, a member of Congress in 1776, one of the committee who drew up the Declaration of Independence, a conspicuous framer of the Constitution, afterward its stanch supporter, in later years the patron of Robert Fulton, and therefore immortal, was at this period the head and pride of the Livingston family.

These were the three families. The Clintons had *power* the Livingstons had *numbers*, the Schuylers had *Hamilton* Neither of the three was strong enough to overcome the other two united, and any two united could triumph over the third.

Such statements as these must, of course, be taken with proper allowance. A thousand influences enter into politics, and general statements are only outline truths. Nevertheless,

in a State where only freeholders have a vote, and where there are not more than twelve or fourteen thousand freeholders, the influence of great families, if wielded by men of force and talent, will be, in the long run, and in great crises, controlling It was so in the State of New York for twenty years after the Revolution.

For some years after coming to New York, Colonel Burr held aloof from these factions. Absorbed in the practice of his profession and the education of his family, he was not reckoned among the politicians. And when, at length, he entered the political field, it was not as an ally of either of the families, but as an independent power who profited by their dissensions, and wielded the influence of two to crush the more obnoxious third. He had a party of his own, that served him instead of family connections. Gradually certain young men of the town, who had nothing to hope from the ruling power, ambitious, like himself, were drawn into his circle, and inspired with his own energy and resolution. They were devoted to their chief, of whose abilities they had an extravagant opinion. In every quarter, they sounded the praises of the man who, they said, was the bravest soldier, the ablest lawyer, and the most accomplished gentleman of his day; endowed with equal valor and prudence; formed to shine in every scene, and to succeed in every enterprise. *Burr's myrmidons*, these young gentlemen were styled by General Hamilton. The *Tenth Legion*, they were proudly called by Theodosia, the daughter They were not as numerous as the young lady's expression would imply, but they were such efficient co-workers with their chief, that the Burrites formed a fourth party in the State, and were a recognized power in it years after the leader had vanished from the scene. This party, as far as I can ascertain, was a merely personal one; its objects, victory and glory. Consisting at first of half a dozen of Burr's personal friends, it grew in numbers with his advancement, until, as just intimated, it became a formidable "wing" of the great Republican party.

During the summer of 1787, all minds were fixed upon the proceedings of the convention that was forming the Constitu

tion under which we now live. The science of government never had such a thorough discussion as it then received at the hands of editors, pamphleteers, and way-side politicians. Shall we have a strong and splendid central government, reducing sovereign States to the rank of departments; or shall these sovereign States merely form a federal Union, for mutual defense? That was the question. In September, the Constitution, which was a compromise between the two systems, and which, therefore, was quite satisfactory to nobody, was submitted to the States for each to ratify or reject. How eagerly and how long, with what ability and learning, the question of ratification or rejection was discussed in this State, need not be recounted here. Governor Clinton, proud of the State he governed, and foreseeing its destiny, thought it was required by the new Constitution to concede too much to the central authority, and to throw away the magnificent advantages of its position. He led the party who opposed ratification. Hamilton, who may almost be called the author of the Constitution, was of course its ablest champion. Jay, Robert R. Livingston, General Schuyler, the Van Rensselaers, were all strenuous in its support, and it was the union of the Livingston influence with the Schuyler, on this great question, that added New York to the States that had accepted the Constitution. William Livingston, the reader is aware, was one of the framers of the instrument.

It is a significant fact that there should be no trace of Aaron Burr in a controversy so interesting and so vital as this. Mr. Davis says he was "neutral" on the question. Hamilton says his "conduct was equivocal." He was in no position that obliged him publicly to espouse either side of the question, and his was not the kind of intellect to shine in the pages of "The Federalist." His letters show, that while this subject was in agitation, he was immersed in law business. In common with most of the leading men of that time, including the framers of the Constitution, and particularly Hamilton, he had a low opinion of the merits of the new system, as a piece of political machinery. Conversing with a gentleman on the subject, toward the close of his life, he used language like this

"When the Constitution was first framed," said he, "I predicted that it would not last fifty years. I was mistaken. It will evidently last longer than that. But I was mistaken only in point of *time*. The crash will *come*, but not quite as soon as I thought."

Though the New York Convention accepted the Constitution by a majority of only three members, in a House of fifty-seven, yet, after the question was disposed of, there was a powerful reäction in favor of the Federal party. The feeling was general that the Constitution must be supported, and fairly tried. In the city, the anti-Federalists, as a party, were almost annihilated, and it was many a year before they gained the ascendancy.

It was in the spring of 1788, when the Federal majority in the city was overwhelming, and in the State considerable, that Colonel Burr first appears in political history as the candidate of the anti-Federal party. On the walls of the city, in the month of April, appeared a handbill announcing to the shattered remnant of the popular party, that

"THE SONS OF LIBERTY, WHO ARE AGAIN CALLED UPON TO CONTEND WITH THE SHELTERED ALIENS, WHO HAVE, BY THE COURTESY OF OUR OWN COUNTRY, BEEN PERMITTED TO REMAIN AMONG US, WILL GIVE THEIR SUPPORT TO THE FOLLOWING TICKET: WILLIAM DEMING, MELANCTHON SMITH, MARINUS WILLET, AND AARON BURR."

With this nomination, I presume, Colonel Burr had little to do. The ticket was probably run merely to keep the party together. Yet, as after making every allowance that even charity requires, Colonel Burr's course as a politician can not be praised, it is only fair to bear in mind that when the popular party seemed hopelessly crushed, was the time when he first allowed his name to be identified with it.

The next year, 1789, there was an election for governor, and the victorious Federalists, under Hamilton, had hopes of ousting Governor Clinton, who was a candidate for reëlection Clinton, however, was so rooted in the affections of the people, that Hamilton despaired of electing an opposition candidate by direct means. He therefore resorted to a maneuver,

which he would have eloquently denounced if it had been devised by Burr. Chief Justice Morris, it was generally supposed and desired, would have been the regular Federal candidate. But six weeks before the election, Hamilton called a meeting in New York of moderate men of both parties, who nominated, as the opposing candidate, Judge Yates, an anti-Federalist, but a man, it was thought, who would be supported by enough Federalists to accomplish Hamilton's object, the downfall of Clinton. Judge Yates was one of Burr's most intimate friends. When Colonel Burr was at Albany in 1782, endeavoring to conquer the opposition of the lawyers to his premature, irregular admission to the bar Judge Yates rendered him essential service, which laid the foundation of a lasting and cordial friendship between them. On every political question since, Colonel Burr and Judge Yates had felt and acted together. With Governor Clinton he had no particular relations. In this movement, therefore, to elevate his old and venerated friend, Colonel Burr joined, and his name appears, with that of Hamilton, William Duer and Robert Troup, as one of the committee of correspondence appointed to promote the object. Yates accepted, and Morris was induced to decline the nomination. The Federalists issued an address, in which with singular absurdity, they avow a *preference* for Morris, but a determination to *vote* for Yates, as Yates was the only man to beat Clinton with. The trick nearly succeeded. Clinton received 6,391 votes; Yates, 5,962: majority for Clinton, 429.

This is the only instance in which Hamilton and Burr ever acted in politics together. There is a tendency in human nature to heap obloquy upon a public man who is irretrievably *down;* and, accordingly, I find writers, who give an account of this election, attributing political inconsistency and maneuvering to Burr. On the contrary, it was Hamilton who was inconsistent, and who maneuvered. As yet Burr was no politician. Nothing was more natural or more proper than his support of an old friend, with whom he was in political accord.

Governor Clinton was evidently of that opinion, for, four

months after the election, he offered Burr the Attorney-Generalship of the State. This was a tribute to the lawyer merely. The office was important and lucrative, but it was not given, at that day, as a matter of course, to a partizan. For some days after the offer was made, Colonel Burr hesitated to accept it, not from any dislike to the office, as he informed the governor, but from other circumstances known to both, and therefore not mentioned. September 25th he signified his willingness to accept, and on the 27th he was appointed. It is conceded, I believe, by every one, that during the two years that Colonel Burr held this office, its duties were performed by him with punctilious correctness and efficiency.

In March, 1790, the Attorney-General was named one of three commissioners, upon whom the legislature devolved the duty of classifying and deciding upon the claims of individuals for services rendered and losses sustained in the revolutionary war. These claimants were numberless. Some of them had served in the State militia, some in the Continental army, and some in both. Others had supplied provisions to both descriptions of troops. Many had had their estates overrun, their houses pillaged or burnt by the foe. Some of the claims were for many thousands of dollars, others for the value of a few bushels of oats or tons of hay. Of course, in the throng of rightful claimaints mingled not a few rogues, whose accounts needed the closest scrutiny. And when the justice of a claim was established, it was often a difficult point to decide whether it was the general government, or the State government that ought to discharge it. In many cases both seemed liable, and the commissioners had to decide in what proportion. The investigation was continued at intervals for the period of two years, at the expiration of which the Attorney-General drew up a report, which was presented to the legislature, and accepted by that body without opposition or amendment. The report was chiefly remarkable for its clear and concise statement of the principles upon which claims had been allowed, rejected, or excluded from consideration. Those principles were made the basis of all future settlements with revolutionary creditors in this State, and Colonel Burr gained

much in reputation from the ability with which they were developed in the report.

The Attorney-General in 1791 was appointed to serve on another commission of great importance, the issue of which was not productive of reputation to any one.

The State, at this time, was in pressing need of money, and exceedingly rich in land. At the close of the war, there were seven millions of acres of land belonging to the State, that were still wild and waste. The magnificient and productive region now known as western New York, the garden of the northern States, was then a wilderness inhabited by Indians, and traversed only by Indian trails. Indeed the entire State of New York, except its southern extremity and the shores of the Hudson river, was in the same primeval condition. It was one of the great questions of State policy, from 1783 to 1791, how to get the wild lands sold and settled. Various laws had been passed to facilitate the object, but it had progressed with provoking slowness, until, in 1791, the State treasury being in extreme need of replenishment, and a whole army of creditors waiting only the award of the commissioners to present and press their claims, it was resolved to force the lands to a sale. To this end, the legislature, by a vote nearly or quite unanimous, authorized the Commissioners of the Land Office to "dispose of any of the waste and unappropriated lands in the State, in such parcels, on such terms, and in such manner, as they shall judge most conducive to the interests of the State." Powers more unlimited were never confided to any body of men. The Commissioners were, the Governor, the Secretary of State, the Attorney-General, the Treasurer, and the Auditor.

Then followed some of the most extraordinary land sales that even this richly-landed continent has known. In the course of the summer, the Commissioners sold the enormous quantity of five and a half millions of acres, at an average price of about eighteen cents per acre. It was sold in prodigious tracts, the number of purchasers not exceeding the number of millions of acres disposed of. One tract brought three shillings an acre; another, two shillings; another, one

shilling. The most astounding sale of all was one to Alexander McComb of more than three million six hundred thousand acres, at the seemingly ridiculous price of eight pence per acre, to be paid in five annual installments! The sum realized by all the sales was a million and thirty thousand dollars, not more than half of which was immediately available.

When these sales were made public a great outcry arose in all parts of the State, and resolutions of censure were moved in the legislature. It was everywhere charged that Governor Clinton had a personal interest in the Macomb purchase. Colonel Burr, it was shown, had had no part in effecting the sales, as he was absent on official duty when they had taken place. At the time, therefore, he escaped the odium of the transaction, and it was reserved for subsequent periods of political contention to connect his name with them. The Commissioners replied, first, by denying, point-blank, that any of their number had the slightest personal interest ineither of the sales; which was, unquestionably, the fact. They said, too, what no one could deny, that they had not transcended the power confided to them by the legislature; that no better terms could be obtained for the lands; and that the chief object of the State in selling was to bring private interest to bear upon getting the lands sold to actual settlers. The Commissioners were, at length, completely exonerated, and the sales which they made really *had* the effect of hastening the settlement of the lands. Experience, I believe, has proved that if there *must* be speculation in wild lands, the people's own domain, it is a less evil to sell it in tracts too large to be retained in the hands of the speculator, than in quantities which are likely to be held by individuals till the toil of surrounding settlers has enhanced their value.

In January, 1791, occurred what is regarded as the great mystery of Colonel Burr's political career. He was elected to represent the State of New York in the Senate of the United States. Rufus King and Philip Schuyler were the first United States Senators chosen by the State of New York; and, as General Schuyler had drawn the short term, his seat would become vacant on the 4th of March, 1791. He was a candi-

date for reëlection. Beside being in actual possession of the seat, he had the advantage of old renown, influential connections, and the powerful aid of Hamilton, now the confidential man of Washington's administration, and in the full tide of his great financial measures. Above all, the Federalists had a majority in the legislature which was to elect the Senator, and Schuyler was the most federal of Federalists. Aaron Burr was a young man of thirty-five, not known in national politics, with no claims upon either party, and with few advantages which were not personal. Yet, upon General Schuyler's nomination, he was at once, and decisively, rejected; and, immediately after, when Aaron Burr was proposed, he was, upon the first vote, in both Houses, elected. Sixteen Senators voted, of whom twelve voted for Burr. In the Assembly, Burr's majority was five.

The newspapers of the time throw no light upon the causes of Burr's election. They record the vote, without a word of comment. No cotemporary record or memoir explains it. Mr. Davis says nothing about it. In the pamphlet war of 1804, Burr's vituperators frequently taunt him with having gained this great step without having done any service entitling him to it, but they do not as much as hint at the means by which it was gained. Of recent historians, the amiable and fair-minded Dr. Hammond (History of Political Parties in the State of New York) attributes Burr's success to his supposed moderation in politics, to his reputation as an orator, and to the contrast his fascinating manners presented to Schuyler's austerity. He adds that Morgan Lewis, a connection of the Livingstons, succeeded Burr as Attorney-General, and suggests that this may have been "*foreseen*" at the time of the election. Mr. Hildreth conjectures that the election of Burr to the Senate may have been a bid from the Federalists to win him over to their side! But would the Federalists, as a party, have defeated Hamilton's father-in-law for such an object?

The only glimmer of light thrown on the affair in the correspondence of the period, is shed by the following passage of a letter from Schuyler to Hamilton, dated January 29th, 1792: "As no good," says the general, "could possibly result from

evincing any resentment to Mr. Burr for the part he took last winter (when the election for Senator occurred), I have on every occasion behaved toward him as if he had not been the principal in the business." What business? If the reference is to the election, we learn from it that General Schuyler attributed his defeat to Burr's personal exertions; and if the general was correct in his supposition, then *we* may conjecture that, in some mysterious way, Colonel Burr contrived to unite in his own support the influence of the Clintons and the Livingstons. The Livingstons, as a family, it is now well known, resented the splendid elevation of the young adventurer, Alexander Hamilton, a man not native to the soil; while Robert R. Livingston, the head of their ancient house, a statesman distinguished in the country's annals while yet Hamilton was a merchant's clerk in the West Indies, was suffered to languish in obscurity. Burr played upon this string a few years later with great effect. It may have been touched in 1791.

Apart from these impenetrabilities, there is no difficulty in plausibly accounting for Colonel Burr's election to the Senate. General Schuyler was personally unacceptable. He was no speaker. He was a thorough-going partizan, and bore the scars of former political contests. He was identified with Hamilton, whose financial system was rending the nation into factions, and whose towering eminence dwarfed so many of his cotemporaries. Against Schuyler a direct party opposition would probably have failed. Burr was a new man, which is, in politics, often an overwhelming advantage. He was thought to be a moderate man, who would represent the State ably, fairly, and faithfully. He was an educated man, in a community where a collegiate education was a valuable distinction, and one of the rarest. He stood before the people in the untarnished luster of powers whose speciality it was to shine. Except Hamilton, he was thought to be the finest orator in the State, as well as a man of peculiarly effective tact. He was master of an address and manner which could be impressive or pleasing as the occasion required. Some members were, doubtless, proud to send to Philadelphia so fine a gen

tleman as Colonel Burr; for, in that day, more than now, manner was power. I have conversed with men who were captivated with the presence and style of the man when he was nearly fourscore, and had both legs in the grave. What power, then, there must have been in his presence when he was in the prime of his years! Just at that time, too, the New York legislature was agitated on the subject of the United States Senate sitting with closed doors; one of the great little questions of the day. Schuyler, haughty old soldier that he was, was the man to insist upon excluding the vulgar public from the deliberations of a body that felt itself to be the American House of Lords. Complaisant and popular Burr, who had enough of the Napoleonic intellect to see the immeasurable importance of little things, was, then and afterward, an advocate of an open Senate.

Thus conjecture attempts to supply the want of information.

If the causes of Burr's elevation are uncertain, the consequences of it are not. Schuyler felt his defeat acutely, and Hamilton was painfully disappointed. It was of the utmost possible importance to the Secretary of the Treasury to have a reliable majority in Congress; and the presence of a devoted father-in-law, in a Senate of twenty-eight members sitting with closed doors, was convenient. From 1791 dates Hamilton's repugnance to Burr, and soon after his letters begin to teem with passages expressive of that repugnance. The two families were on terms of politeness, then and always. The two men were, to all appearance, cordial friends enough down to the last month of Hamilton's life. But from this time, in whatever direction Burr sought advancement, or advancement sought him, his secret, inveterate opponent was Alexander Hamilton; until at length the politics of the United States was resolved into a contest between these two individuals.

The effect upon Burr's own mind of his election to the Senate is dimly visible in his correspondence He seems now to have accepted politics as his vocation. His wife writes to him a few weeks after the election, and some months before he took his seat, that he ought to take measures to reëstablish

his health *before turning politician.* His own letters contain scarcely an allusion to politics. Once, he advises Mrs. Burr not to travel, if possible, with a political partizan, but rather with an opponent. Occasionally he says that he dares not trust the public mail with political secrets. When he does write upon politics, it is in ciphers. He requests 18 to ask 45 whether, for any reasons, 21 could be induced to vote for 6, and, if he could, whether 14 would withdraw his opposition to 29, and 11 exert his influence in favor of 22. The reader will, however, remember that this mode of correspondence was common at that day between politicians. Though Burr was, perhaps, the most mysterious politician of them all, yet all politicians were, more or less, mysterious.

CHAPTER XII.

A SENATOR.

ENTERS THE SENATE — THE SENATE'S INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENT WASHINGTON — BURR'S ADDRESS TO THE PRESIDENT — LETTER FROM THE FRENCH KING — THE PRESIDENT FORBIDS COLONEL BURR TO EXAMINE THE RECORDS — BURR TALKED OF FOR THE GOVERNORSHIP OF THE STATE — BURR'S OPINION ON THE DISPUTED CANVASS — SECOND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION — BURR A CANDIDATE — HAMILTON OPPOSES AND DENOUNCES HIM — BURR AS A DEBATER — WASHINGTON'S REFUSAL TO SEND HIM AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE — THIRD PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION — BURR A PROMINENT CANDIDATE — HAMILTON AGAIN OPPOSES HIM — DOMESTIC LIFE — DEATH OF MRS. BURR — EDUCATION OF HIS DAUGHTER.

ON the first day of the session, October 24th, 1791, Colonel Burr "took the oaths and his seat."

The next day President Washington, as the custom then was, delivered his annual Speech to both Houses assembled in the Senate Chamber. The Speech was composed after the model of the English king's speeches to Parliament, which it resembled also in brevity. First, the President addressed his "Fellow-citizens of the Senate and of the House of Representatives;" then, the "Gentlemen of the Senate;" then, the "Gentlemen of the House of Representatives;" and lastly, the "Gentlemen of the Senate and House of Representatives." When the ceremonial was over, and the Senators were left in possession of their chamber, a committee of three was appointed to draw up the usual address in reply to the President, and Colonel Burr, their new and youngest associate, received the compliment of being named chairman of that committee. He prepared the address, which, on being read to the Senate, was accepted without amendment. The committee were next ordered to wait on the President to ask when and where he would receive the Senate's reply to his speech. Colonel Burr, on their return, reported Monday at noon, at the President's own house. At the time ap-

pointed, the Senators went in procession to the President's, and were received with that serious and stately courtesy which was then in vogue among persons in high office.

Fancy a long dining-room, with the tables and chairs removed Before the fire-place stands a tall and superb figure, clad in a suit of black velvet, with black silk stockings and silver buckles. His hair, white with powder, is gathered behind in a silk bag. He wears yellow gloves, and holds a cocked hat adorned with cockade and plume. A sword, with hilt of polished steel and sheath of white leather, further relieves the somber magnificence of the President's form. The Senators enter, with Vice-President Adams at their head, and form a semicircle round the President while Mr. Adams reads the address.

As a relic of an extinct usage, the reader may be gratified to see the address prepared by Colonel Burr for this occasion. It reads as follows:

"SIR: The Senate of the United States have received with the highest satisfaction the assurances of public prosperity contained in your speech to both Houses. The multiplied blessings of Providence have not escaped our notice, or failed to excite our gratitude.

"The benefits which flow from the restoration of public and private confidence are conspicuous and important; and the pleasure with which we contemplate them is heightened by your assurance of those further communications which shall confirm their existence and indicate their source.

"While we rejoice in the success of those military operations which have been directed against the hostile Indians, we lament with you the necessity that has produced them; and we participate the hope that the present prospect of a general peace, on terms of moderation and justice, may be wrought into complete and permanent effect; and that the measures of government may equally embrace the security of our frontiers and the general interests of humanity. Our solicitude to obtain which, will insure our zealous attention to an object so warmly espoused by the principles of benevolence, and so highly interesting to the honor and welfare of the nation.

"The several subjects which you have particularly recommended, and those which remain of former sessions, will engage our early consideration. We are encouraged to prosecute them with alacrity and steadiness, by the belief that they will interest no passion but that for the general welfare; by the assurance of concert, and by a view of those arduous and important arrangements which have been already accomplished.

"We observe, sir, the constancy and activity of your zeal for the public good. The example will animate our efforts to promote the happiness of our country."

To this address, the senatorial record informs us, the President was pleased to make the following reply:

"GENTLEMEN: This manifestation of your zeal for the honor and the happiness of our country derives its full value from the share which your deliberations have already had in promoting both.

"I thank you for the favorable sentiments with which you view the part I have borne in the arduous trust committed to the government of the United States; and desire you to be assured that all my zeal will continue to second those further efforts for the public good which are insured by the spirit in which you are entering on the present session."

Whereupon, we may presume, the Senate made a formal and ceremonious exit, and then returned to their chamber.

The session thus imposingly begun, lasted more than six months, but no spectator witnessed, and no corps of reporters recorded, the proceedings. The official record exists, but it is little more than a formal statement of votes. In Mr. Benton's valuable abridgment of the Congressional Debates, the proceedings of this Senate, from October to May, occupy only five pages. On one of those pages the name of Colonel Burr occurs in connection with an affair which even now has a touching interest.

How grateful the people of the United States were to the French, and to the French king, for the timely help afforded by them in the late war, can not be realized by the present luxurious generation; nor how passionate and universal was

the sympathy of the delivered nation with the subsequent struggle of the French for freedom. No sooner was America free, than France aspired. In the summer of 1789 the news of the Bastile's immortal storming thrilled the young republic. Soon, the excesses of the Parisians, in their delirium of error and desire, shocked the world, and gave pause to the more conservative even of Americans. The flight of the king in 1790, appears in the memoirs and letters of that age as a terrible event; one which lost the revolutionists the sympathy of millions. But the king was brought back to Paris; a grand reconciliation with the people he had misunderstood was enacted; the king accepted the constitution; and France, for a week, was in ecstacies. Down to this period, and beyond it, the great mass of Americans were ardent sympathizers with the Revolution. But Washington, Hamilton, Adams, Rufus King, and other leading conservatives, began to be quite decided in the opinion that the French Revolution was essentially diabolical, and could issue in no good to the French, or any other people.

In March, 1792, the President sent a message to Congress worded with his usual caution, but so worded as to betray his own opinion. "Knowing," said he, "the friendly interest you take in whatever *may* promote the happiness and prosperity of the French nation," he laid before them a letter just received from his Most Christian Majesty. The letter which poor Louis had sent his "very dear great friends and allies," was the following:

"We make it our duty to inform you that we have accepted the constitution which has been presented to us in the name of the French nation, and according to which France will be henceforth governed. We do not doubt that you take an interest in an event so important to our kingdom, and to us and that it is with real pleasure we take this occasion to renew to you assurances of the sincere friendship we bear you. Whereupon, we pray God to have you, very dear, great friends and allies, in his just and holy keeping."

This letter having been read in the Senate, a difference arose as to the manner in which its reception should be ac-

knowledged. First, a frigid resolution was proposed, to the effect that the President be informed, that the Senate have received the news contained in the king's letter with satisfaction. This resolution was rejected by a vote of six to twenty-one; Colonel Burr voting against it; his colleague, Mr. King, for it. The resolution was then amended, so as to request the President to *make known to the king* that the Senate had received the tidings with *the highest* satisfaction. This was passed.

Colonel Munroe, a few days after, revived the subject of the Senate's sitting with closed doors, and moved that, during the recess, galleries be constructed in the chamber for the accommodation of the public, who should, after the present session, be admitted to witness the proceedings. This proposition was rejected by a vote of eight to seventeen. Colonel Burr, who always favored the measure, and afterward assisted to carry it, was absent, I presume, when this vote was taken, as his name does not appear in the record.

Though Colonel Burr began his senatorial career by being the medium of the Senate's high courtesy to General Washington, yet, before the session was over, he came into disagreeable collision with the President. Burr was Business incarnate. His activity was irrepressible. Being now cut off from his ordinary employments, and having deliberately turned politician, he was eager to acquire knowledge respecting state-craft. It was one of his projects, too, to write a History of the American Revolution. For these reasons, he was often busy, during his first winter in Congress, among the records in the Department of State, of which his friend Jefferson was then the chief. Always an early riser, he was accustomed, for a time, to go to the department as early as five in the morning. He employed a messenger to make a fire, a confidential clerk to assist him in searching and copying, a servant to bring him his breakfast; and so, from five until ten o'clock, the business went vigorously on. This practice was continued till nearly the close of the session, when operations were interrupted by a peremptory order from the President, forbidding his further examination. Desiring to complete

his knowledge respecting the late surrender of the western posts, he addressed a note to Mr. Jefferson, requesting permission to make that particular examination. The Secretary replied that "it had been *concluded* to be improper to communicate the correspondence of existing ministers." Burr appears to have regarded this as an uncalled-for and arbitrary proceeding. It was in accordance with the system of the time; but from what we *now* know of the relations of the persons concerned, and the scenes daily transpiring in the cabinet, we may infer that if the searcher of the records had been a Senator approved and trusted by the Secretary of the Treasury, he would not have been denied access to them—at least, not in a peremptory manner.

In April, 1792, there was to be an election for governor in the State of New York, and Colonel Burr was frequently mentioned as a candidate. At that time, the respectable salary and immense patronage of the governor, rendered the office more imposing and more desired than a seat in the Senate. Burr was thought of as a candidate, first, by the Republican party, who feared to try the field again with Governor Clinton; secondly, by the Federalists, who were not confident of succeeding with a candidate fully identified with their party; thirdly, he was proposed as an independent candidate, on the ground that he *belonged to no party*, and would be supported by the *moderate men* of all parties. The truth is, that Colonel Burr was then a very popular man, and both parties would have liked to secure the advantage of his name and talents. While it was still uncertain whether he would run for the governorship, some of Hamilton's friends were of opinion that the best policy of the Federalists would be to support Burr, and they wrote to Hamilton to that effect. Mr. Ledyard, February 1, wrote from New York, that on his arrival in the city, he found that "a tide was likely to make strongly for Mr. Burr. Mr. Schuyler," he continues, "supposes that if Mr. Clinton and Mr. Burr were the only competitors, and his (Schuyler's) friends thrown out of the scale, it would be doubtful which succeeded." After showing that, to beat Burr, the Federalists must either support Clinton or run a third candi

late, neither of which was advisable, Mr. Ledyard adds the following observations: "If Burr finally succeeds, and you have not the merit of it, it would be an event extremely disagreeable to me. With this impression, I have sought repeated interviews with him, until I could procure an *artless* declaration of his sentiments, both with respect to the union n present grounds, and also with respect to you. He has expressed a sincere regard for the safety and well-being of the former. With respect to yourself, he expresses an entire confidence in the wisdom and integrity of your designs, and a real personal friendship; and which he does not seem to suppose you doubt of, or that you ever will, unless it may arise from meddling interveners."

The next day after this letter was dispatched, James Watson, another leading Federalist, writes to Hamilton in a similar strain. Burr's chances, he thought, were good, and, if the Federalists should go for him, strong. Had they not better support him? If they do not, will it not make him an opponent of the Federal party, if he is not now? If they do, will it not attach him to the Federalists? And if he should turn traitor, will it not so destroy his popularity as to deprive him of the power of doing harm? "Whenever," says Mr. Watson, "I imagine how much easier it is to embarrass and obstruct the benign operations of government than to give it the requisite tone and vigor, I am solicitous to remove talents, perseverance, and address, as far from the opposition as possible." "The absence of evil will continue to be desirable until the public mind becomes more quiet, and federal habits take deeper root. I shall only add that the cautious distance observed by this gentleman toward all parties, however exceptionable in a politician, may be a real merit in a governor."

Upon the proposal thus plausibly urged, Hamilton, the unquestioned leader of the Federal party in the State, placed his veto. A word from him would, in all probability, have made Aaron Burr Governor of New York in 1792. But that word was not spoken. The Federalists nominated the virtuous John Jay, the Republicans adhered to their old standard

bearer, Governor Clinton, and the contest was a strictly party one.

It was the closest and angriest the State had yet seen, and the issue, instead of calming, exasperated parties more than he strife itself. There was an informality in the canvass, and both sides claimed the victory. The canvassers were eleven n number, of whom seven thought that Clinton had carried the State by a majority of one hundred and eight, while the remaining four were for giving the victory to Jay. After many stormy discussions, the canvassers agreed to request the opinion of the Senators, Rufus King and Aaron Burr, upon the point in dispute, which was the following:

The law then required that the votes of a county should be sealed up by the inspectors of election, delivered into the hands of the *sheriff*, and by him or his deputy conveyed intact to the Secretary of State. Now, it chanced that the county of Otsego, on this occasion, had no sheriff. R. R. Smith had held the office, but his term had expired. Another gentleman had been appointed sheriff, but had not yet been sworn in; and during the brief interregnum, the important business of receiving and conveying the votes had presented itself. In these circumstances, Mr. Smith, the *late* sheriff, as was natural, performed the duty. But he was not the *sheriff*. Nay, he had been elected to the board of supervisors, an office incompatible with that of sheriff, and had actually taken his seat at the board, and performed official acts. The question was, whether the votes received and sent by him could be legally canvassed. If yes, the Federalists had triumphed, and John Jay was governor. If no, the Republicans were in the ascendant, and George Clinton retained the power he had wielded for sixteen years.

Every head in the United States that had a smattering of law in it was given up to the consideration of this great question in the spring of 1792. The two Senators, upon conferring, discovered that an irreconcilable difference of opinion existed between them on the subject. Colonel Burr proposed that they should, for that reason, decline advising the canvassers. But as Mr. King avowed an intention of giving his

own opinion, nothing remained but that Colonel Burr should give his also. The two opinions were given. Both were able, clear, and brief. Mr. King's, which was for admitting the votes, carried conviction with it to every Federal mind in the country; while Colonel Burr's, which was for rejecting them, was equally convincing to the Republican intellect. Indeed, it was, considering all the circumstances, a question really difficult to decide, and the best lawyers of that day differed upon it, as doubtless would the best lawyers of the present day if it were submitted to them. Before giving his own, Colonel Burr obtained the written opinion of Edmund Randolph (Attorney-General), Pierpont Edwards, Jonathan D. Sergeant, and other eminent legal friends, all of whom coincided with him. On the other hand, Rufus King could exhibit an imposing array of names in support of his opinion. Mr. King was for having *justice* done; Burr, for having the *law* observed. Both opinions were doubtless as sincere as they were characteristic.*

The canvassers, thus compelled to choose between two opinions diametrically adverse, decided, *of course*, to follow that which accorded with the political preferences of the ma-

* The following is the material paragraph of Colonel Burr's opinion, which, he declared, was never answered, except by abuse: "There are instances of offices being exercised by persons holding under an authority apparently good, but which, on strict legal examination, proves defective; whose acts, nevertheless, are, with *some limitations*, considered as valid. This authority is called *colorable*, and the officer, in such cases, is said to be an officer *de facto;* which intends an intermediate state between an exercise strictly lawful, and one without such color of right. Mr. Smith does not appear to me to have holden the office of sheriff, on the 3d of March, under such color or pretense of right. The term of his office had expired, and he had formally expressed his determination not to accept a reappointment; after the expiration of the year he accepted, and even two days before the receipt of the ballots, openly exercised an office incompatible with that of sheriff; and it is to be inferred, from the tenor of the affidavits, that he then knew of the appointment of Mr. Gilbert. The assumption of this authority by Mr. Smith, does not even appear to have been produced by any urgent public necessity or imminent public inconvenience. Mr. Gilbert was qualified in season to have discharged the duty, and, for aught that is shown, his attendance, if really desired, might have been procured still earlier."

jority of their number. They pronounced George Clinton duly elected. The exasperation of the Federalists, upon the promulgation of this decision, was such that, for a time, the State seemed in danger of anarchy. For many years the dream of that party had been to see Clinton defeated, and a Federalist in the executive chair. He *had* been defeated, but the scepter which they were just about to grasp, they now saw snatched away from between their eager hands. Nothing but the moderation of Mr. Jay, and the general regard for law, which prevailed in the most order-loving of parties, saved the State from temporary confusion.

As each Senator had decided in favor of his own party, the motives of both were assailed. Colonel Burr, it was charged, was an adherent of Governor Clinton, and wished to ingratiate himself with the Republicans. In a letter to a friend, written soon after he had given his opinion, he alludes to these accusations. "Upon the late occasion," he says, "I earnestly wished and sought to be relieved from the necessity of giving any opinion, particularly from a knowledge that it would be disagreeable to you and a few others whom I respect and wish always to gratify. But the conduct of Mr. King left me no alternative. I was obliged to give an opinion, and I have not yet learned to give any other than which my judgment directs. It would, indeed, be the extreme of weakness in me to expect friendship from Mr. Clinton. I have too many reasons to believe that he regards me with jealousy and malevolence. Still, this alone ought not to have induced me to refuse my advice to the canvassers. Some pretend, indeed, but none can believe, that I am prejudiced in his favor. I have not even seen or spoken to him since January last."

Nevertheless, three months after these words were written, Governor Clinton nominated him to the bench of the Supreme Court of the State. Colonel Burr preferred to retain his seat in the Senate, and declined the judgeship.

The attention of the public was soon drawn from questions affecting a single State to one in which all the States were equally concerned. For the second time, the young nation was to choose chief magistrates; or, to speak more correctly,

a *Vice-President*, for there could be no competition for the first office in the people's gift, while George Washington was willing to serve them in it. There was an opposition, it is true; but its force was directed chiefly against Hamilton's measures; and as soon as it was known that General Washington had consented to serve another term, the hopes of the opposition were limited to the election of a Vice-President, in place of Mr. Adams.

At that time, the reader must bear in mind, no one was directly nominated for the office of Vice-President. The Constitution required each presidential elector to vote for two persons to fill the two highest offices; the man who received the greatest number of votes was declared President, and he who received the next highest number was declared Vice-President. At the first presidential election ever held, the vote of the electoral college was as follows: For George Washington, 69 votes (the whole number); John Adams, 34; John Jay, 9; Robert H. Harrison, 6; John Rutledge, 6; John Hancock, 4; George Clinton, 3; Samuel Huntingdon, 2; John Wilton, 2; James Armstrong, 1; Edward Telfair, 1; Benjamin Lincoln, 1. Mr. Adams, therefore, became Vice President though he received one less than a majority of the whole number of votes. At that election there was nothing like an organized opposition. Every elector's first choice was General Washington; and for the second office named the favorite son of his own State, or a man particularly admired by himself.

But now there was opposition; of which more will be said in another chapter. At present the object of that opposition, as just remarked, was to elevate one of their own party to the Vice-Presidency. George Clinton, Governor of the State of New York, the man distinguished above all others in the United States for his opposition to the adoption of the federal Constitution, was the candidate upon whom a majority of the party fixed their hopes, and upon whom its strength was finally concentrated. But, among the names mentioned in private circles and in public prints for the office, was that of Aaron Burr. Indeed, for a short period, it seemed uncertain who

would be the candidate of the opposition in some of the northern States, Clinton or Burr!

Rufus King began to be alarmed for the success of Mr Adams. September 17, 1792, we find him writing to Hamilton in this manner: "If the enemies of the government are secret and united, we shall lose Mr. Adams. Burr is industrious in his canvass, and his object is well understood by our antis. Mr. Edwards is to make interest for him in Connecticut, and Mr. Dallas, who is here, and quite in the circle of the governor and the party, informs us that Mr. Burr will be supported as Vice-President in Pennsylvania. Should Jefferson and his friends unite in the project, the votes of Mr. Adams may be so reduced, that though more numerous than those of any other person, he may decline the office. Nothing which has heretofore happened so decisively proves the inveteracy of the opposition. Should they succeed in degrading Mr. Adams, much would be to be apprehended in respect to the measures which have received the sanction of government."

It is but common fairness to remind the reader that this letter was written by a political opponent, who could not be *personally* cognizant of Burr's movements as a politician. In reading letters, to be hereafter quoted, the same fact is to be constantly kept in view by those who wish to know the truth respecting the man and his times.

Hamilton replies to Mr. King that he is astonished to hear of Burr's appearance as a candidate. The Secretary of the Treasury was evidently puzzled, and, perhaps, a little alarmed. A few days after, he wrote to a friend (whose name has not been revealed by the editor of his works) a long letter deprecating the advancement of Burr, and denouncing him in the strongest language that even his vigorous pen could command. After saying that he was not yet quite sure that "Burr's appearance on the stage was not a diversion in favor of Mr. Clinton," he proceeds as follows:

"Mr. Clinton's success I should think very unfortunate; I am not for trusting the government too much in the hands of its enemies. But still, Mr. C. is a man of property, and in private life, so far as I know, of probity. I fear the other

gentleman is unprincipled, both as a public and a private man. When the Constitution was in deliberation, his conduct was equivocal; but its enemies, who, I believe, best understood him, considered him as with them. In fact, I take it he is for or against nothing, but as it suits his interest or ambition. He is determined, as I conceive, to make his way to be the head of the popular party, and to climb, *per fas aut nefas*, to the highest honors of the State, and as much higher as circumstances may permit. Embarrassed, as I understand, in his circumstances, with an extravagant family, bold, enterprizing, and intriguing, I am mistaken if it be not his object to play the game of confusion, and I feel it to be a religious duty to oppose his career.

"I have hitherto scrupulously abstained from interference in elections; but the occasion is, in my opinion, of sufficient importance to warrant, in this instance, a departure from that rule. I therefore commit my opinion to you without scruple; but in perfect confidence. I pledge my character for discernment, that it is incumbent on every good man to resist the present design."

This was written on the 21st of September. On the 26th, he writes to another unnamed person in the same strain. "Mr. Burr's integrity as an individual," says Hamilton, "is not unimpeached," and, "as a public man, he is one of the worst sort. Secretly turning liberty into ridicule, he knows as well as most men how to make use of the name. In a word, if we have an embryo Cæsar in the United States, 'tis Burr."

These letters were not designed for the amusement of the Secretary's correspondent. In a few days, Rufus King writes back to him, that "*care has been taken to put our friends at the eastward on their guard.*" The letters produced *effects*, we see.

To General C. C. Pinckney of South Carolina, Hamilton writes to the same purport, and urges him to promote the election of men friendly to the administration. As he denounced Burr in his northern letters, he assails Jefferson in his southern—Jefferson, his colleague in the cabinet. "'Tis suspected by some," he says, "that the plan is only to divide the votes

of the northern and middle States to let in Mr. Jefferson by the votes of the South. I will not scruple to say to you, in confidence, that this also would be a serious misfortune to the government. That gentleman whom I once *very much esteemed*, but who does not permit me to retain that sentiment for him, is certainly a man of sublimated and paradoxical imaginations, entertaining and propagating opinions inconsistent with dignified and orderly government."

Five days later, the active Secretary of the Treasury writes another letter upon Burr, but in a much more guarded manner. "My opinion of Mr. Burr," he remarks, with admirable consistency, "is YET TO FORM, but according to the present state of it, he is a man whose only political principle is to *mount, at all events*, to the highest legal honors of the nation, and as much further as circumstances will carry him. Imputations, not favorable to his integrity as a man, rest upon him, but I do not vouch for their authenticity."

On the 21st of September, then, he was willing to pledge his character for discernment, that Burr was an embryo Cæsar. On the 15th of October, his opinion of the individual was yet to form. The good Hamilton was a man of very ardent feelings; he was devoted to the support of the system he had created; and was apt to give way to a too sweeping denunciation of the men whom he disapproved. And besides, his correspondent of September was, probably, a man he could more implicitly *trust*, than he could him of October.

But these denunciations might as well have been spared. It is certain, that neither Burr nor his friends entertained a serious thought of his competing for the Vice-Presidency He received just one vote. Of the eight electors of South Carolina, seven gave their second vote for John Adams; one for Aaron Burr. The number of electors had increased, in four years, from 69 to 132. George Washington again received the whole number. For John Adams, 77 votes were cast; for George Clinton, 50; for Thomas Jefferson, 11; for Aaron Burr, 1. This single vote, given by a personal friend, probably, may have been of some importance to Burr, in associating his name, in the popular mind, with the office.

For six years, Colonel Burr played a distinguished, and occasionally, a conspicuous part in the Senate of the United States. And that is nearly all we know of him as a Senator. He was renowned as an orator, but no speech of his exists, except in faint outline. John Taylor writes a note to him, on one occasion, in which he uses this language: "We shall leave you to reply to King: first, because you desired it; second, all depends on it; no one else can do it; and the audience will expect it." There are allusions in the political papers of the day to a great speech delivered by Burr in opposition to Jay's treaty, which evidently gained him much applause. It is spoken of as though every one was acquainted with it; as we should allude to one of the well-known speeches of Clay or Webster. Rufus King, I am enabled to state, was of opinion that Burr's talents as a debater were overrated. In conversing upon those times, Mr. King would say that Burr had a rare faculty in summing up a discussion, but that he added to it few ideas of his own. He never opened a debate. But where a question had been discussed to exhaustion, he knew how to use well the vast stores of information which had been elicited, and to set in new and dense array the arguments that had been used by others. This faculty, aided by his persuasive and emphatic manner, made him a favorite speaker; and the more, as he never wearied an audience by prolixity.

That he was an industrious member is indicated by the number of committees upon which he served. The records show, however, that he was not generally in his place during the first and last days of a session. We may infer from his correspondence that he was full of occupation of some kind in Philadelphia. He frequently alludes to the heaps of unopened letters upon his table.

He acted with the liberal, or Republican party, invariably. He contended for an open Senate, session after session, till, in 1794, the measure was carried by a vote of nineteen to eight. He supported the resolution that "every printer of newspapers may send one paper to each and every other printer of newspapers within the United States, free of postage, under such

regulations as the Postmaster-General shall provide." He favored the admission of Albert Gallatin to serve as a Senator, which was opposed on the ostensible ground that he had not been a citizen of the country for the requisite nine years. He took the lead in opposing Chief Justice Jay's mission to England, for the twofold reason that it was unnecessary to send any minister at all to England at that time; and that it was contrary to the spirit of the Constitution, impolitic and unsafe, to select an embassador from the bench of the Supreme Court. All measures tending to the support and comfort of the French in their struggle with the leagued despotisms of Europe, found in Burr an advocate. In a word, he was a leader and champion of the party which acknowledged Jefferson as its chief, and boasted the adherence of Madison and Monroe.

After Burr's downfall, Jefferson used to say that he had never liked him; and that, at the very height of Burr's popularity, he had habitually cautioned Madison not to trust him too far. "I never," wrote Jefferson once, "thought him an honest, frank-dealing man; but considered him as a crooked gun, or other perverted machine, whose aim or shot you could never be sure of." But this was in 1807. There is abundant proof, that, in the full tide of his senatorial career, Burr's standing, both with the leaders and with the masses of his party, was only second to that of Jefferson himself.

Take this incident, for example. In 1794, the unpopularity of Gouverneur Morris, the American minister in France, was at its height. The republicans of Paris, and the republicans of the United States, were aware of his utter want of sympathy with the Revolution, and were clamorous for his recall. General Washington had let fall an intimation of his willingness to yield to their desire, and to appoint a member of the opposition in his place. Accordingly, a caucus of the Republican Senators and Representatives was called to select a candidate to be proposed to the President for the mission. The caucus agreed to recommend Colonel Burr. Mr. Madison and Mr. Monroe were members of the committee appointed to wait upon General Washington, and communicate the preference of the caucus; and in the interview with the

President, Mr. Madison was the spokesman. After hearing the message, General Washington was silent for a few moments. Then he said, it had been the rule of his public life never to nominate for a high and responsible office a man of whose *integrity* he was not assured. He had not confidence in Colonel Burr in that respect, and therefore must decline nominating him. The committee retired, and reported the result of the interview. The caucus unanimously resolved to adhere to their nomination, and requested the committee to inform the President of the fact. General Washington was evidently irritated by the second proposal of an offensive name, and replied with warmth that his decision was irrevocable. He added, apologetically, "I will nominate you, Mr. Madison, or you, Mr. Monroe." Madison replied that he had, long ago, made up his mind not to go abroad. The committee, upon reporting the result of the second conference to the caucus, found it more inflexible than ever; and were instructed to go a third time to the President, and say that Colonel Burr was the choice of the Republican Senators and Representatives, and that they would make no other recommendation. This message was delivered to the Secretary of State, who, knowing the President's feelings on the subject, declined delivering it. Colonel Monroe was finally selected.

Reflecting upon this circumstance, the idea *will* occur to the individual long immersed in the reading of that period that this invincible distrust of Colonel Burr was perhaps implanted, certainly nourished, in the mind of General Washington by his useful friend and adherent, Alexander Hamilton. Hamilton was not a person to conceal from General Washington his repugnance to the man whose career he felt it a religious duty to oppose. Washington had trusted and applauded Burr in the Revolution. Whence this utter, this resolute distrust, if not derived from the minister in whose sagacity and honesty the President had such absolute faith? Another suspicion steals over the immersed intellect. The remarkable pertinacity of the democratic caucus *may* have been partly owing to the desirableness of removing an unmanageable

candidate three thousand miles from the scene of the next presidential election.

From that contest the preëminence of General Washington was to be removed, and a *President* was to be chosen. Jefferson was the choice of a majority of the Republicans; but, since the last election, Burr had made surprising advances in popularity and importance. George Clinton was eclipsed. Burr was everywhere spoken of as the Republican choice for the second office, and there were certainly a respectable number of persons in the country who preferred him for the first. We find numerous indications of this in the letters and papers of the time. A gentleman writes from Boston to Hamilton, December 9th, 1796: "Your Judge Smith sent letters to some of our electors, and, I believe, to New Hampshire, soliciting votes for Burr very strongly, and rather pressing for Jefferson." Hamilton writes to Rufus King (then in Europe), December 16th, 1796: "Our anxiety has been extreme on the subject of the election for President. If we may trust our information, which we have every reason to trust, it is now decided that *neither Jefferson nor Burr* can be President. * * * The event will not a little mortify Burr. Virginia has given him only one vote."

We may infer from this language, that there was a period of the canvass when Hamilton, the brains and nerve of the Federal party, apprehended the *possibility* of Aaron Burr's succeeding General Washington in the presidential chair!

But, not to dwell upon this campaign—since a more stirring and a more decisive one awaits us—the result of it was as follows: John Adams received 71 votes; Thomas Jefferson, 68; Thomas Pinckney, 59; Aaron Burr, 30; Samuel Adams, 15; Oliver Ellsworth, 11; George Clinton, 7; John Jay, 5; James Iredell, 2; George Washington, 2; John Henry, 2; Samuel Johnson, 2; C. C. Pinckney, 1. So John Adams became President, Thomas Jefferson, Vice-President; and Aaron Burr was conspicuously before the country as a candidate for those coveted places. Of the 30 electoral votes cast for Burr, Tennessee gave him 3; Kentucky, 4; North Carolina, 6; Virginia, 1; Maryland, 3; Pennsylvania, 13. Not a vote did he

get from a Puritan State; nor did Jefferson. New England was as Federal as she was Puritanical, and had no vote for the anti-Federal grandson of her Puritan-in-chief. This fact does not countenance John Adams's emphatic assertion, that the capital upon which Burr embarked in the business of politician was the fame of his father and grandfather.

While thus Colonel Burr had been striding toward the high places of the world, events of importance had occurred in his own household. Before entering upon the decisive period of his political life, let us pause here for a moment and see how he appeared, in the day of his glory, as a husband, as a parent, and as a master.

As years rolled on and cares increased, the letters of Mrs. Burr to her husband became longer, and less in the style that Juliet would have used in writing to banished Romeo. But they were warm, confiding, and elegant; as his were to her. They were the letters of a careful and devoted wife to a husband she was proud of, and desired above all things to help and gratify. To her he confided every thing. His business was left partly in her care, and with her he conversed upon his political plans. He sometimes gave her information to be communicated to his political friends in New York. Occasionally, during the session of Congress, he would hurry away upon the adjournment of the Senate on Friday, to meet his wife at Trenton, and after spending Saturday and Sunday in her society, return on Sunday night to Philadelphia. To the last, she was a happy wife, and he an attentive, fond husband. I assert this positively. The contrary has been recently declared on many platforms; but I pronounce the assertion to be one of the thousand calumnies with which the memory of this singular, amiable, and faulty being has been assailed. No one now lives who can, of his own personal knowledge, speak of the domestic life of a lady who died sixty-two years ago But there are many still living whose parents were most intimately conversant with the interior of Richmond Hill, and who have heard narrated all the minute incidents of the life led therein. The last of the old servants of the family died only a short time ago; and the persons best acquainted with

the best part of Burr's character are still walking these streets His own letters to his wife—all respect, solicitude, and affection—confirm the positive asseverations of these. I repeat, therefore, that Mrs. Burr lived and died a satisfied, a confiding, a beloved, a trusted wife.

Soon after her husband "turned politician," her health, never vigorous, began to fail, and her maladies at length concentrated into a cancer of the most virulent and offensive description. She lingered long in anguish. Her husband, both by personal attentions and by the advice which he sought from the most eminent physicians, did much to relieve her sufferings—did all that mortal aid could do. He studied her case. He described her symptoms to his friend, Dr. Benjamin Rush, of Philadelphia, and concerted with him a new treatment. But nothing availed to stay the ravages of the disease. He proposed at one time to leave Congress, that he might devote himself exclusively to attending upon her. She besought him not to do so, and he remained in Philadelphia till her disease assumed a form that threatened speedy dissolution. She became, at length, an object most pitiable to contemplate; and in the spring of 1794, death relieved her sufferings, and deprived of their mistress the heart and home of Aaron Burr. They had lived together twelve years—twelve happy and triumphant years.

Burr was not given to sentiment. It was his principle not to mourn over an irrevocable calamity. "The best compliment you can pay me," he used to say to his wife, "is to be cheerful while I am absent." If he did not visibly grieve over her death, to the last day of his life he spoke of her in terms of emphatic and unqualified admiration. Among the very last words he ever spoke, was a sentence like this: "The mother of my Theo. was the best woman and finest lady I have ever known."

His daughter, a rosy little girl of eleven, was all that now made his house a home. From her infancy his heart and mind had been interested in that most fascinating of employments, the culture of a being tenderly beloved. With what unwearied assiduity he pursued the sweet vocation! His let

ters, written from his senatorial desk at Philadelphia, snow that his home thoughts were divided between the sick mother and the studious child; and when the mother's sufferings were over, the daughter's improvement absorbed his care. He pursued this darling object intelligently. "Cursed effects of fashionable education!" he writes to his wife, in Theodosia's tenth year, "of which both sexes are the advocates, and yours eminently the victims. If I could foresee that Theo. would become a *mere* fashionable woman, with all the attendant frivolity and vacuity of mind, adorned with whatever grace and allurement, I would earnestly pray God to take her forthwith hence. But I yet hope, by her, to convince the world what neither sex appear to believe—that women have souls!"

He appears to have gone to the opposite extreme. In her tenth year she was reading Horace and Terence, in the original Latin, learning the Greek grammar, speaking French, studying Gibbon, practicing on the piano, taking lessons in dancing, and learning to skate. Like all her race, she was precocious, and was accounted a prodigy, and she really was a child of superior endowments; but no girl of ten could pursue such a course of study without injury. Doubtless, the delicacy of her health, in after years, was due to this excess of study in childhood. As a child, however, she seemed to thrive upon the too luxurious diet; for though she had the family diminutiveness, she was a plump, pretty, and blooming girl. The moral precocity, which is so much more deadly than mental, she escaped, as it appears she told fibs, begged off from practicing, and was excessively fond of a holiday; which may have kept Horace and Gibbon from destroying her. The plan of her education was not merely devised by her father, but he personally aided in carrying out every part of it. He explained her lessons, he gave minute directions to her numerous instructors, he would have nothing learned by rote, he encouraged her with commendation, he gently ridiculed or sharply rebuked her indolence. When he was in Philadelphia, he required her to write to him frequently. He replied as often, mentioning each of her mistakes in spelling and gram-

mar, remarking upon the writing and style of her last letter, comparing it with former efforts, and awarding praise or blame, as he thought she deserved. His letters to her are very kind, very thoughtful, very ingenious, often very wise and good.

Burr inherited the true pedagogical instinct. One of his epistles he concludes thus: "Let me see how handsomely you can subscribe your name in your next letter, about this size." In another, he tells her how much pleasure it would give him if she could contrive to lug into her letters occasionally a scrap of Terence, apropos. Sometimes he exults over the correctness of her last letter, telling her he had showed it to Dr. Rush, or some other friend, who thought it must have been written by a girl of sixteen. He reminds her to sit up straight, else she will go into a consumption; and then "farewell papa, farewell pleasure, farewell life." He gives her the most minute directions respecting the style and arrangement of her letters; tells her that he never permits one of hers to remain unanswered a single day, and demands of her the same promptitude.

The moral advice which he gives her is, most of it, very excellent. He insists upon her treating her governess with the most perfect respect and consideration. "Remember," he says, "that one in the situation of madame has a thousand things to fret her temper; and you know that one out of humor for any cause whatever, is apt to vent it on every person that happens to be in the way. We must learn to bear these things; and, let me tell you, that you will always feel much better, much happier, for having borne with serenity the spleen of any one, than if you had returned spleen for spleen." Nothing could be better than that. In the same letter he remarks: "I have often seen madame at table, and other situations, pay you the utmost attention, offer you twenty civilities, while you appeared scarcely sensible that she was speaking to you; or, at the most, replied with a cold *remercie*, without even a look of satisfaction or complacency. A moment's reflection will convince you that this conduct will be naturally construed into arrogance; as if you thought that all attention was *due* to you,

and as if you felt above showing the least to any body. I know that you abhor such sentiments, and that you are incapable of being actuated by them. Yet you expose yourself to the censure without intending or knowing it. I believe you will in future avoid it. Observe how Natalie replies to the smallest civility which is offered to her." That, too, is sound morality.

But there is, occasionally, a passage in his letters to her which has the Chesterfieldian taint. The worst example of this kind is the following: "In case you should dine in company with Mrs. ——, I will apprize you of one circumstance, by a trifling attention to which you may elevate yourself in her esteem. She is a great advocate for a very plain, rather abstemious diet in children, as you may see by her conduct with Miss Elizabeth. Be careful, therefore, to eat of but one dish; that a plain roast or boiled: little or no gravy or butter, and *very sparingly* of dessert or fruit: not more than half a glass of wine; and if more of any thing to eat or drink is offered, decline it. If they ask a reason—*Papa thinks it not good for me*, is the best that can be given."

Theodosia rewarded her father's solicitude by becoming the best educated woman of her time and country, as well as one of the most estimable. She never, of course, completed the conquest of Latin or Greek, but French she made entirely her own; and wrote an English style that could be elegantly playful, or correctly strong, as the subject required. On one occasion, during her father's public life, she translated, for his use, the Constitution of the United States into French. She also, at his request, undertook the translation of one of Bentham's works from French into English, and partly executed it. Her father never ceased, while she lived, to direct and urge the further improvement of her mind. From the deepest abyss of his misfortunes, he could still say to her, "*Be* what my heart desires, and it will console me for all the evils of life." And what a daughter was she to him! From the age of fourteen, the engaging mistress of his household, the companion of his leisure, the friend of his mind! In other days, his eloquent, persistent, fearless, indomitable champion!

Colonel Stone, in his Life of Brant, the Indian chief, gives us a pleasant glimpse of Theodosia Burr in her fourteenth year. She was then a grown woman, and reigned supreme over her father's house during his long absence at the seat of government. Brant, during one of the closing years of Burr's senatorship, visited Philadelphia, where, for some time, the magnificent Indian was a fashionable lion. Colonel Burr gave him a dinner party, which Volney, Talleyrand, and other notabilities attended. The incidents of that entertainment used to be related by Burr for forty years after they occurred, and they have been communicated to me almost in his own words. But, unfortunately, the chief's English, though innocent, and infinitely amusing to the guests, can not be repeated to a fastidious public, and, therefore, the humors of that banquet must remain for ever unrecorded. Suffice it to say, that the Frenchmen were delighted with the lion, who roared his best for their pleasure. Before Brant's leaving Philadelphia for New York, Colonel Burr gave him a note of introduction to his daughter, in which he requested her to show him every attention.

"Miss Theodosia," says Colonel Stone, who derived the information from Burr himself, "received the forest-chief with all the courtesy and hospitality suggested; and performed the honors of her father's house in a manner that must have been as gratifying to her absent parent as it was creditable to herself. Among other attentions, she gave him a dinner party, selecting for her guests some of the most eminent gentlemen in the city, among whom were Bishop Moore and Doctors Bard and Hosack. In writing to her father upon the subject, she gave a long and sprightly account of the entertainment. She said that, in making the preliminary arrangements, she had been somewhat at a loss in the selection of such dishes as would probably suit the palate of her principal guest. Being a savage warrior, and in view of the many tales she had heard, of

> "'The cannibals that each other eat,
> The anthropophagi, and men whose heads
> Do grow beneath their shoulders,'

she added, sportively, that she had a mind to lay the hospital under contribution for a human head to be served up like a boar's head in ancient hall barbaric. But, after all, she found him a most Christian and civilized guest in his manners."

During these years of greatness, Colonel Burr, like most other persons in his sphere, was an owner of slaves, who were employed as household servants. That he was a kind and considerate master to them, his letters to Theodosia, and *their* letters to him, give touching evidence. "Poor Tom," he writes of a servant who had met with an accident, "I hope you take good care of him. *If he is confined by his leg, he must pay the greater attention to his reading and writing.*" One of his letters from Philadelphia to Theodosia, concludes thus: "Alexis often bids me to send you some polite and respectful message on his part, which I have hitherto omitted. He is a faithful, good boy; upon our return home he hopes you will teach him to read." Another letter alludes pleasantly to two of his servants. "Mat's child," he tells Theodosia, "shall not be christened until you shall be pleased to indicate the time, place, manner, and name. I have promised Tom that he shall take me to Philadelphia, if there be sleighing. The poor fellow is almost crazy about it. He is importuning all the gods for snow."

He corresponded with his servants, when away from home. Their letters to him are very artless and pleasing. "We are happy to hear," says "Peggy" in one of her letters, "that Sam and George and the horses are in good order, and all the family give their love to them." Another of Peggy's epistles concludes thus: "But, master, I wish to beg a favor of you; please to grant it. I have found there is a day-school, kept by an elderly man and his wife, near to our house, and if master is willing that I should go to it for two months, I think it would be of great service to me, and at the same time I will not neglect my work in the house, if you please, sir." Peggy received an immediate answer, granting her request. She replies in a few days: "I go to the school, since master is willing, and I like the teacher very much. He pays great attention to my learning, and I have teached Nancy her letters ever

since you have been gone, which I think will be of as much service to her as if she went to school. We are all well at present, and I hope that you are the same." She tells her master, in the same letter, that there has been a report in the paper that he had been wounded in a duel, and that the family were all very uneasy about it, though the story was not believed in the town. He replies immediately that he is perfectly well, and has had no quarrel with any one. He urges her to go to school punctually, thanks her for teaching Nancy, and says he shall soon go home and give them all New Years' presents.

All this is very amiable. There never lived, indeed, a more completely *amiable* man than Aaron Burr. Generous, thoughtful for the pleasure of others, careless of his own, a pleasant, composed, invincibly polite person, credulous even, easily taken in by plausible sharpers, but with these softer qualities relieved by courage, tact, and industry—who could have foreseen for such a character the destiny he encountered, the infamy that blackens his name?

But, in this difficult world, in this justly-ordered universe, to be amiable is not enough.

An anecdote, related with great animation by himself, of this period of his life, will suffice to indicate one of his faults against society. He was sitting in his library reading one day. A lady entered without his perceiving her, and going up softly behind his chair, gave him a slap on the cheek, saying, "Come, tell me, what little French girl, pray, have you had here?" The abruptness of the question, and the positive manner of the lady, deceived him, and he doubted not she had made the discovery. He admitted the fact. Whereupon, his fair inquisitress burst into loud laughter at the success of her artifice, which she was induced to play off upon him from the mere circumstance of having smelt musk in the room.

Upon this and other points there will be time to enlarge when we reach the expiatory years of his life. At present, we must attend to the affairs of the nation.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ERA OF BAD FEELING.

The three Periods of our History — Parties before the Revolution — Parties after the Revolution — Effect of the French Revolution upon American Politics — Hamilton — Jefferson — The tone of Society on Jefferson's return from France — The Differences between Hamilton and Jefferson — Rise of the Democratic Party — John Adams — Public Excitement in 1798.

It was the fortune of Aaron Burr to contribute, in a remarkable manner, to the first triumph of his party. That the reader, not fresh in the early history of his country, may understand the importance of that triumph, it is necessary that he should be informed or reminded of the state of parties, and the feeling of the country, and of the character of certain leading persons who flourished at that time. This chapter, then, is to be a digression—to be skipped by a reader who is in haste.

"Whig and Tory belong to natural history," Mr. Jefferson used to say. This truth, that free communities *naturally* divide into two parties, one in favor of keeping things as they are, the other strenuous for making them better than they are, simplifies the study of political history, and should always be borne in mind by the student. It is not an infallable guide through the labyrinth of party politics, but it greatly assists the groping explorer.

An historian might divide our political history into three periods. The first began with the adoption of the Constitution, and ended with the election of Jefferson; a period which, in the recent language of Mr. Seward, "gave to the country a complete emancipation of the masses from the domination of classes." The second began with Jefferson, and ended with the annexation of Texas. This was the period of peaceful democratic rule, the fruit of Jefferson's ideas and

Burr's tactics. The third period began with Texas, and will end with the final settlement of the slavery problem. We have now to do only with that eventful twelve years when the new democratic ideas contended with old Custom and old Thought in this country. It was eminently a period of "bad feeling;" as periods are apt to be in which narrow opinions and the narrow virtues that grow out of them, are rudely assailed by the larger, half-comprehended ideas of a greater time coming. To give an adequate picture of that eventful and most interesting time would require a volume, and a genius. A few glimpses are all that can be afforded here.

Until George III. began to reign (1760), the political parties of the American colonies were about the same as those of England. John Adams, who could himself remember as far back as 1745, has a great deal to say, in his diaries and letters, about parties and partizans in America before the Revolution. Besides Whigs and Tories, he records there was a party for the *Pretender* in the colonies. One of his letters contains the following passage: "You say, our divisions began with Federalism and anti-Federalism. Alas! they began with human nature; they have existed in America from its first plantation. In every colony divisions always prevailed. In New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Massachusetts, and all the rest, *a court and country party have always contended.* Whig and Tory disputed very sharply before the Revolution, and in every step during the Revolution. Every measure in Congress, from 1774 to 1787 inclusively, was disputed with acrimony, and decided by as small majorities as any question is decided in these days."

In another letter of Mr. Adams's, the following interesting statement occurs: "It was reported and believed (in the colonies) that George II. had uniformly resisted the importunities of ministers, governors, planters, and projectors, to induce him to extend the system of taxation and revenue in America, by saying, that 'he did not understand the colonies; he wished their prosperity. They appeared to be happy at present; and he would not consent to any innovations, the consequences of which he could not foresee.'"

Sensible king! But, early in the next reign, the "ministers, governors, planters, and projectors" began to have their way; and from that moment began the history of parties in America. How slow the loyal colonists were to resist, or even to remonstrate! "No king," wrote Joseph Reed, in 1774, "ever had more loyal subjects, nor any country more affectionate colonists than the Americans *were*. I, who am but a young man, remember when the king was always mentioned with a respect approaching to adoration, and to be an *Englishman* was alone a sufficient recommendation to any office or civility. But I confess, with the greatest concern, that those happy days seem swiftly passing away."

In the year preparatory of the Revolution, Whig and Tory were words of meaning. Shall we submit? Shall we resist? The issue was marked. Beginning with a minority of one, the party for resistance gathered strength with every new aggression, till, in 1776, two thirds of the native colonists, as John Adams computed, were in favor of independency. *Two thirds!* not more; as any student of the period will soon discern. In 1777, it is questionable if the Whigs were even in a majority. We read without surprise, for human nature is human nature even in the most heroic times, that when the British army was approaching, people hastened to nail a rag of Tory *red* to their front doors, and when the patriot army marched by, the rags of the whole region turned *blue*.

The war ended. Blue was in the ascendant, and Red was nowhere. The active rich Tories fled; the active poor Tories, cowed and suppliant, became, as we have seen, a bone of contention with the exultant Whigs. Human nature asserted itself, and again there were two parties in the country. In the numberless suits and questions that arose in the State of New York respecting the property and rights of the ex-Tories, Hamilton and his Schuylers were the champions of a defeated, a prostrate faction. Burr and the Clintons were the defenders of the doctrine that to the victors belonged the spoils of victory.

Next arose the great question of the acceptance or rejec-

tion of the Constitution. After a period of doubt and struggle, the intensity of which the average modern reader can know nothing about, because the historian has not yet emerged who can tell the story, the Constitution was accepted, and set in motion. The battle then subsided, but did not cease. The anti-Federalists still clamored for amendments. They thought the central government too strong, too imposing, too British. It reduced the importance of the States. A Governor, who *had* held his head high above all men's, was an insignificant official in comparison with the PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES! The Federalists, on the contrary, thought the government fatally inefficient. It became, however, the general desire, that the Constitution, such as it was, should have, at least, a fair trial. With that feeling, Washington turned his back upon the home where he was alone a contented man, and journeyed with heavy heart to New York to organize the new government.

It must be mentioned that the country was still *very English*. Social distinctions were marked and *undisputed*, and a gentleman was a gentleman. There were great land-owners in the interior who held the position in society that country gentlemen now do in England. They had numerous tenants; they were justices of the peace; they were elected, as a matter of course, to the legislature; they were the *gentry* of the country, to whom the country, without a rebellious thought, took off its hat. "Society" in the cities was exclusive. It consisted of a few great families, who admitted within their circle only officials and other consequential persons. A gentleman was really an imposing figure at that day. Years after the Revolution, John Hancock dressed in a style that now, even upon the stage, we should think rather extravagant. Upon his powdered and pig-tailed head, he wore a cap of red velvet, which covered, without concealing, one of white cambric; the cambric being turned over the velvet, and forming a border two inches wide. A blue damask gown, lined with silk, a white stock, a white satin embroidered waistcoat, black satin breeches, white silk stockings, red morocco slippers, silver buckles at knee and instep, were other articles of his attire.

Above all there was in his manner a mingled dignity and sweetness, which was not rare at that time, but the very tradition of which is now scarcely known to the people of the United States. Politeness was one of the exclusive, superficial good things which democracy had rudely to destroy, in order that a deeper and better politeness might become possible and *universal;* a politeness without any lies in it.

The power of the "gentry" was, of course, lessened by the Revolution. They had never been a numerous class in the colonies; and the Revolution ruined perhaps one half of them. The peace drove a large number to Canada and England. The young nation, therefore, over which Washington presided, was a nation of rustics, but rustics who had, as yet, but dim perceptions of their rights and power, rustics habituated to take off their hats to gentlemen who were got up regardless of expense, and who rode about in chariots drawn by four horses, or by six.

The French Revolution woke the dozing giant.

The first delirium over, the French had to fight a continent in arms, and during that enormous contest there could not be a neutral heart. American politics, in those years, resolved themselves into this all-including question, *Which side shall we take?* Or, which nation shall our young republic adopt as ally and *exemplar*, France or England?

Fear intensified the excitement with which this question was discussed; for the nation was not yet powerful; it was a boy looking on while giants wrestled. Every one feared for the stability of the new, the untried government. Some thought it would dissolve into anarchy; others, that it would degenerate into monarchy; some lived in terror of war; others foreboded national bankruptcy. Nothing but an all-pervading and constantly-operating fear could, I think, have wrought up the two parties into such a frenzy. This generation has witnessed the landing on these shores, amid the salute of a thousand guns, and the cheers of two hundred thousand excited spectators, of the orator Kossuth. From that great furore, judge of the nation's delirium when, to its natural sympathy with a beloved nation struggling against despots,

was added a fear of being drawn into the maëlstrom of their prodigious warfare. The ardent souls, I know, desired this; as the same temperaments were for drawing the sword in defense of Hungary. But the nation knew better; knew that peace was its *only* policy. In time, too, came slights, insults, injuries, first from one belligerent, then from the other, to mingle rage with the other inflamed passions.

At the seat of government, during this excitement, there were four men of more importance than any others, as well from their great characters as their great places. These were Washington, Hamilton, Adams, and Jefferson. Of Washington I need not speak. For sixty years, the object of the undiscriminating eulogy of politicians and rhetoricians, who have sought to use his vast popularity* for their own purposes, the character of the man has been so obscured, that to only the most studious eyes can it now become discernible. By claiming for him every excellence known to human nature, his true glory is sacrificed, and the benefit of his great example squandered. But I am not to speak of him, and need not, for the part he played in this drama was more passive than active. He was the Rock to which the ship of State was moored. The great measures of his administration were devised by Hamilton, his first Secretary of the Treasury, who was the real ruler of the country during all these twelve years' of democracy's struggle for supremacy.

Alexander Hamilton was a shining specimen of a class of characters which Great Britain produces in numbers: men of administrative ability, of active, suggestive intellects, but of understandings that will not admit a revolutionary idea—that is, an idea really in advance of their time. These men wield the tools of government with dexterity; with pertinacity they cling to the old methods. Hamilton, it must be ever remembered, was no American; he never understood America; and, as he himself confessed, he was "not the man for America." The English government was his ideal; his dream was to make America a larger and better England. He was for a

* Rufus King wrote to Hamilton from London, that the most popular men in England were, first, George III., and, next to him, George Washington.

strong, a regular, an imposing government; he supported General Washington in his levees, his state dinners, his speeches to Congress, his birth-day celebrations, and the other forms which reminded the Republican party of a royal court. He thought the *interested* support of the wealthy classes was necessary to a strong government. He was exactly as much of a Democrat as George III. or William Pitt. In the people he had no faith; and thought it vain to attempt to convince them by argument and fact; the mob was an unreasoning child, to be coaxed, flattered, used, and, above all, governed. This enormous BLASPHEMY against God's image he repeats, in great variety of phrase, in his private letters. "You are your own worst enemies," he once said, in a stump speech, to the people of this city.

The basis of Hamilton's moral character was noble and disinterested; no man more honorable in his feelings than he; none more generous or more kind. He loved the country of his adoption, and would have died to save it; that is, to convert it permanently to his way of thinking. He was confident that the "crazy old hulk of a Constitution," as he used to term it, could not last. A crisis was approaching. When it arrived, then the Federalists would save their country by giving it a government that could govern. But Hamilton was an honorable man: he would stand, he said, resolutely by the Constitution till the old hulk *did* go down; it should have the fairest of fair trials. He was morbidly in earnest. Gouverneur Morris, who loved the man, says, in one of his letters, "Our poor friend, Hamilton, bestrode his hobby, to the great annoyance of his friends." Hamilton had no great hold upon the people except as the man trusted and preferred by Washington. I think Washington liked him better than any man in the United States; for Hamilton, too, was an honest man, and he had, what the President had not, a rapidly-suggestive mind, and a fluent tongue. Honest, I say; but not honest as Washington was honest. In the maddest party contentions, Washington's integrity was never shaken, nor questioned, except by fools. But in the strife of parties, Hamilton did, more than once, more than twice, *advise* measures which no man will

now defend. He had the foible, so common in this country after the Revolution, of valuing himself chiefly upon his military talents. He had also the soldierly weakness with regard to women. His passions were warm, and he indulged them; but not, as is often whispered, and sometimes printed, to the extent of profligacy. He loved lovely women, and lovely women loved him. In one notorious instance, probably in other instances, his passions led him astray.

The full-length portrait of Hamilton, painted by Trumbull for the city of New York, which used to adorn the old Exchange, and was snatched, damaged, from the great fire of 1835, is preserved at the Library of the New York Historical Society. The picture is precious, and should be either restored or copied. Within these few years, Mrs. Hamilton stood before it, and pronounced it "a good likeness of the general." On the torn canvas, we discern a slight, erect, under-sized, elegant figure, with a bright, rosy face; a man, one would think, more fitted to shine on the battle-field and in the drawing-room, than in an office with a hundred clerks around him.*

A writer who saw Hamilton, describes him in these words: "He was expected one day at dinner, and was the last who came. When he entered the room, it was apparent, from the respectful attention of the company, that he was a distinguished individual. He was dressed in a blue coat, with bright buttons; the skirts of his coat were unusually long. He wore a white waistcoat, black silk small-clothes, white silk stockings. The gentleman who received him as a guest, introduced him to such of the company as were strangers to

* The bust of Hamilton by Cerracci in the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts shows us a different face. The features are good enough, but not liberally disposed; a somewhat contracted countenance, with slightly overhanging forehead, and a mass of propelling force behind the ears. There is also a miniature of Hamilton in this city, painted from life, which exhibits a sensual fullness of cheek and chin. It is an instance of the unreliableness of history that of the six most accessible portraits of Hamilton, only two (and those the worst pictures) look as if they were designed to resemble the same person.

him; to each he made a formal bow, bending very low, the ceremony of shaking hands not being observed. The fame of Hamilton had reached every one who knew any thing of public men. His appearance and deportment accorded with the dignified distinction to which he had attained in public opinion. At dinner, whenever he engaged in the conversation, every one listened attentively. His mode of speaking was deliberate and serious; and his voice engagingly pleasant. In the evening of the same day he was in a mixed assembly of both sexes; and the tranquil reserve noticed at the dinner table, had given place to a social and playful manner, as though in this he was alone ambitious to excel."

A man thus endowed, and possessing a Scotch tenacity of purpose, can not but powerfully affect the opinions of the society of which he is a leader and an ornament. Hamilton did. Besides being the soul and intellect of the Federal party, he gave to the upper society of the cities its tone and tendency.

But there was another man of ideas, of will, and of talent, acting conspicuously upon the scene; Thomas Jefferson, Secretary of State. This man, a gentleman by birth, a Democrat from conviction, a reflective philanthropist by disposition, had been abroad from 1785 to 1789, and so escaped the travail of Constitution-making. He left his country while its natural tendencies to Republicanism were at full tide. He found France heaving with the coming earthquake. With his own eyes he saw the haggard, thistle-eating peasants. With his own hand he felt and weighed the sorry morsels of black bread that mothers gave to hungry children. In his journeys through fair France, he was much in the peasants' hovels, and looked with a wrathful brother's eyes upon those mean abodes. On the sly, when the good woman's face was turned, we see this singular gentleman feeling the bed upon which he had taken care to sit, to ascertain its material and quality, and looking into the pot to see what the poor wretch was cooking for her children's dinner. His office of embassador made him a resident of châteaus and a frequenter of courts, and he could see precisely how much of natural right the puny seigneurs and stolid monseigneurs had to lord it over the sons of

toil. The "*folly of heaping importance upon idiots*" became exceedingly clear to Thomas Jefferson. He was one of those rare Americans whom a European tour has instructed and confirmed in humane principles, not effeminated and befooled

In person, as in character, Jefferson was a contrast to Hamilton. He was a tall man, six feet one in stature, it is said; well enough proportioned, but not of a compact, energetic build. His legs were long, and seemed loose-jointed. His Welsh extraction showed itself in reddish flaxen hair, a light complexion, blue eyes, and a general Celtic cast of features. His manner, says tradition, was plain and friendly, not polished nor imposing. He was a good-tempered man, and his writings, as we see, are calm and flowing. But there was fire in Thomas Jefferson. Under the cold surface of some of his letters, we can see the lava of his convictions flowing white hot. He was no orator: he never made a speech, I believe. His influence was owing entirely to his character, his social rank, and, above all, to the accordance of his convictions with the instincts of the people of the United States. Jefferson was eminently a man of opinions, as distinguished from action, as Hamilton was a man of action, as distinguished from opinion. "Thought," says Goethe, "expands: action narrows." Jefferson had all the breadth and liberality which enlightened opinion bestows; but in devising measures and carrying on the actual business of governing a State, he would have been excelled, perhaps, by Hamilton. In the revolutionary war, the ardent, executive spirits of the country sought glory in the field. But Jefferson, the scholar, the philosopher, the jurist, remained a civilian to the last, and served his country only with his name, his mind, and his pen. This fact, in connection with another, namely, that he was only thirty years old when the war broke out, indicates the man of books. At all periods of his life, war and violence were abhorrent to this contemplative lover of his species.

It is the fashion now to underrate Mr. Jefferson. In the saloons of our Historical Societies, in the volumes of Mr. Hildreth's History of the United States, and, indeed, in most polite circles and books of the present time, the character of

the Great Democrat fares ill. The polite circles and books of the United States have never sympathized with what alone makes the United States a nation of promise. And Thomas Jefferson, like General Washington, has been for fifty years the victim of incessant eulogy. The student of history, therefore, sits down to the investigation of his life and character with a feeling of weariness and disgust, expecting to find him as complete a disappointment as other great names of that period prove to be on close examination. But no; Jefferson, to the surprise of the reader of his works, is discovered to be a person of original and solid merit. He more than shared the enlightenment of the foremost man of his age; he was in advance of his age; his country has not yet come up to Thomas Jefferson. If to General Washington, more than to any other man, this young nation owes its existence, to Thomas Jefferson, more than to any other man, it owes the peaceful preservation of its grand peculiarity. Faults, indeed, he had, and faults he committed. An inexecutive man in an executive station is sure to make mistakes. But his merits and services, immense and various, almost beyond example, fill me with gratitude and admiration—sinner as he was against my poor hero.

Longing for his native fields, Jefferson left France in the glorious year of the Bastile, and came home to Virginia. He had no misgivings about the Revolution: he understood and loved the Revolution. Before that purifying storm had burst upon an astounded world, he had watched and hailed the signs that foretold the coming vindication of the rights of man. Up to the time of his leaving France, the Revolution had worn only its nobler aspects, and he sympathized with it, heart and intellect.

He reached Virginia, and was summoned soon by General Washington to the office of Secretary of State. With unfeigned reluctance (for he was an enthusiast in agriculture) he left his ample estates and came to New York to join the new government. There he met with a surprise. But let us quote his own language:

"I returned from the French mission," says Mr. Jefferson, "in the first year of the new government, having landed

in Virginia in December, 1789, and proceeded to New York in March, 1790, to enter on the office of Secretary of State. Here, certainly, I found a state of things which, of all I had ever contemplated, I the least expected. I had left France in the first year of her Revolution, in the fervor of national rights and zeal for reformation. My conscientious devotion to those rights could not be heightened, but it had been aroused and excited by daily exercise. The President received me cordially, and my colleagues, and the circle of principal citizens, apparently with welcome. The courtesies of dinner parties given me, as a stranger newly arrived among them, placed me at once in their familiar society. But I can not describe the wonder and mortification with which the table conversations filled me. Politics were the chief topic, and a preference of kingly over republican government was evidently the favorite sentiment. An apostate I could not be, nor yet a hypocrite; and I found myself, for the most part, the only advocate on the republican side of the question."

Mr. Jefferson records part of the conversation which passed at a cabinet dinner at this period—present, himself, Mr. Adams, and Mr. Hamilton:

"After the cloth was removed, and one question argued and dismissed, conversation began on other matters, and by some circumstance was led to the British Constitution, on which Mr. Adams observed, 'Purge that constitution of its corruption, and give to its popular branch equality of representation, and it would be the most perfect constitution ever devised by the wit of man.'

"Hamilton paused and said, 'Purge it of its corruption, and give to its popular branch equality of representation, and it would become an *impracticable* government: as it stands at present, with all its supposed defects, it is the most perfect government which ever existed.'

"And this was assuredly the exact line which separated the political creeds of these two gentlemen. The one was for two hereditary branches, and an honest elective one; the other, for a hereditary king, with a House of Lords and Com-

mons corrupted to his will, and standing between him and the people. Hamilton was indeed a singular character. Of acute understanding, disinterested, honest, and honorable in all private transactions, amiable in society, and duly valuing virtue in private life, yet so bewitched and perverted by the British example, as to be under thorough conviction that corruption was essential to the government of a nation. Mr. Adams had originally been a Republican. The glare of royalty and nobility, during his mission to England, had made him believe their fascination a necessary ingredient in government."

Hamilton and Jefferson could not be an harmonious pair of cabinet ministers. Hamilton hated, Jefferson loved, the French Revolution.* Hamilton approved, Jefferson detested the monarchizing forms of Washington's administrations. Hamilton was for a strong and overshadowing federal government; Jefferson was strenuous for the independence of the States. Hamilton was in favor of high salaries and a general liberality of expenditure; Jefferson, liberal with his own money, was penurious in expending the people's. Hamilton desired a powerful standing army; Jefferson was for relying chiefly upon an unpaid, patriotic militia. Hamilton would have had our embassadors live at foreign courts, in a style similar to that of the courtly representatives of kings; Jefferson was opposed to any diplomatic establishment. Hamilton had a

* Like the Bourbons, the New York Federalist learns nothing, and forgets nothing. While writing this page, my eyes wandered for a moment to the newspaper which contained Senator Wadsworth's speech on the Trinity Church question (delivered in March, 1857). Mr. Wadsworth claimed to speak as the representative of "the Jays, the Hamiltons, and the Kings," whom he evidently regards as the elect of the human race. Alluding to the gentleman who thought that the vestry of Trinity should not have unchecked control of the church's great estate, the honorable and unlearned Senator said, "Neither Jack Cade nor Ledru Rollin ever proposed any thing bolder. All Jacobinism stands without its parallel. The attacks upon the noblesse of France, when untold millions of property fell the prey of plebeian rapacity, furnishes the only fit illustration which my mind can recall to express my abhorrence of this outrageous proposition." This is eminently Hamiltonian. But for *Hamilton* to speak in that manner of the French Revolution was excusable, as he died before the labors of scores of historians and biographers had flooded that period with light.

great opinion of the importance of foreign commerce; Jefferson knew that home production and internal trade are the great sources of national wealth. Hamilton gave a polite assent to the prevailing religious creed, and attended the Episcopal Church; Jefferson was an avowed and emphatic dissenter from that creed, and went to the Unitarian chapel. And finally, Hamilton, the ex-clerk, was a very fine gentleman, and wore the very fine clothes then in vogue; Jefferson, the hereditary lord of acres, combed his hair out of pig-tail, discarded powder, wore pantaloons, fastened his shoes with strings instead of buckles, and put fine-gentlemanism utterly out of his heart for ever.

"Hamilton and I," said Jefferson, long after, "were pitted against each other every day in the cabinet, like two fighting-cocks." No wonder. They soon became, as all the world knows, personally estranged, and Hamilton, never too scrupulous in political warfare, assailed his colleague by name in the newspapers. From the cabinet the contention spread to the farthest confines of the nation, and became at length the angriest and bitterest this nation has known.

A few passages from the writings and reminiscences of the time will show the state of public feeling during this contest between the new and old ideas.

Of the excitement caused by General Washington's cool reception of absurd Genet, the French embassador, who made a triumphal progress through the country in 1793, John Adams wrote to Jefferson in after years: "You certainly never felt the terrorism excited by Genet in 1793, when ten thousand people in the streets of Philadelphia, day after day, *threatened to drag Washington out of his house*, and effect a revolution in the government, or compel it to declare war in favor of the French Revolution, and against England. The coolest and the firmest minds, even among the Quakers in Philadelphia, have given their opinions to me, that nothing but the yellow fever, which removed Dr. Hutchinson and Jonathan Dickinson Sergeant from this world, could have saved the United States from a fatal revolution of government. I have no doubt you were fast asleep, in philosophical tranquil-

.ity, when ten thousand people, and perhaps many more, were parading the streets of Philadelphia on the evening of my fast day; when even Governor Mifflin himself thought it his duty to order a patrol of horse and foot to preserve the peace; when Market street was as full as men could stand by one another, and even before my door; when some of my domestics in frenzy, determined to sacrifice their lives in my defense; when all were ready to make a desperate sally among the multitude, and others were with difficulty and danger dragged back by the rest; when I myself judged it prudent and necessary to order chests of arms from the war-office to be brought through by-lanes and back doors, determined to defend my house at the expense of my life, and the lives of the few, very few domestics and friends within it."

The delirium of the public during the early years of the French Revolution, is strikingly shown in a letter which Mr. Adams wrote to his wife in 1794. "The rascally lie," wrote the Vice-President, "about *the Duke of York in a cage;* and Toulon and all the English fleet in the hands of the Republicans, was fabricated on purpose to gull the gudgeons; and it completely succeeded, to my infinite mortification. An attempt was made to get me to read the red-hot lie to the Senate, in order to throw them into as foolish a confusion as that below them; but I was too old to be taken in, at least by so gross an artifice, the falsehood of which was to me palpable." This lie, palpable as it was, not only threw the House of Representatives into confusion, but set all the bells of Philadelphia ringing, and made the city, for a few hours, the scene of vociferous rejoicing.

Graydon, in his *Memoirs* of this period, tells a story that gives us a lively idea of the popular feeling. "I remember," says he, "one day at the table of General Mifflin, at this time President of the State (Pennsylvania), when the Parisian courtezans were applauded for contributing their patriotic gifts. I ventured (Graydon was a thorough-going Federalist, and 'gentleman of the old school'), to call in question the immense merit of the proceeding. I was stared at by a pious clergyman for the shocking heterodoxy of my sentiments, and

should probably have been drawn into an altercation, no less disagreeable than indiscreet, had not the general, in a friendly manner, pacified the parson by whispering him in the ear, that I was perfectly well-disposed, and only sporting an opinion. So overwhelming was the infatuation, that even this godly personage had quite forgot that incontinency was a sin. He '*could have hugged the wicked sluts—they pleased him!*'"

During this contest between young Democracy and old Custom, a very marked change took place in the costume, the manners, and the minor morals of the people. The feeling of equality expressed itself in dress. John Jay, among others, alludes, in one of his letters, to the effect of the French Revolution in banishing silk stockings and high breeding from the land. Pantaloons became the outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible republicanism. Hair-powder, pig-tails, and shoe-buckles began to disappear; and the polite observances that had grown out of the old-world distinctions of rank, were discontinued by the more ardent republicans. The recently published *Recollections* of Peter Parley, contain much precious and pleasantly-given information respecting the gradual change that came over the spirit of the country in the time of Jefferson. The excellent Parley is a sad Federalist, it is true, and his sympathies are much more with the good old time, than with the better new time; but he is a faithful and agreeable narrator. Before the Jeffersonian era, he tells us, travelers who met on the highway saluted each other with formal and dignified courtesy; and children stopped, as they passed a grown person, and made the bow they had been practiced in at school for such occasions. But as democracy spread, these grand salutations "first subsided into a vulgar nod, half ashamed and half impudent, and then, like the pendulum of a dying clock, totally ceased."

Another little fact mentioned by Mr. Goodrich is significant. "Pounds, shillings, and pence," says he, "were classical, and dollars and cents vulgar, for several succeeding generations. 'I would not give a penny for it,' was genteel; 'I would not give a cent for it,' was plebeian." Among the benefits bestowed upon the country by Jefferson, one was its

admirable currency; which, if he did not invent, he so advocated as to insure its adoption.

A ludicrous anecdote related by the same author, though of a somewhat later stage of the democratic triumph, has an historic value. "A Senator of the United States," says Mr. Goodrich, "once told me that at this period all the barbers of Washington were Federalists, and he imputed it to the fact that the leaders of that party in Congress wore powder and long queues, and of course had them dressed every day by the barber. The Democrats, on the contrary, wore short hair, or, at least, small queues, tied up carelessly with a ribbon, and therefore gave little encouragement to the tonsorial art. One day, as the narrator told me, while he was being shaved by the leading barber of the city—who was, of course, a Federalist—the latter suddenly and vehemently burst out against the nomination of Madison for the presidency by the democratic party, which had that morning been announced. 'Dear me!' said the barber, 'surely this country is doomed to disgrace and shame. What Presidents we might have, sir! Just look at Daggett, of Connecticut, or Stockton, of New Jersey! What queues they have got, sir—as big as your wrist, and powdered every day, sir, like real gentlemen as they are Such men, sir, would confer dignity upon the chief magistracy; but this little Jim Madison, with a queue no bigger than a pipe-stem! sir, it is enough to make a man forswear his country!'"

The reader, I hope, is one of those who will see in these extracts proof that what democracy destroyed was either *sham*, or so mingled with sham, as to be inseparable from it. But many of our sedate and stately forefathers could not see this. Jefferson was a name of horror in New England for many a year; clergymen preached against him, and prayed against him, even by name.

There was great activity of mind at this time. At the beginning of the revolutionary war, there were forty newspapers published in the colonies. The number had not increased when the Constitution was adopted, in 1787. During Washington's first term, several new papers were started, but

in his second term, and in the first half of Adams's administration, the number of newspapers doubled. There were more daily papers published in Philadelphia in 1798 than there are in 1857. In the heat of the warfare between the Federalists and Republicans, the political papers went rabid, and foamed personalities and lies.

What Jefferson says of the press, after some years of this madness had spoiled it for every good purpose, may be quoted here:

"Nothing," wrote Mr. Jefferson, in 1807, "can now be believed which is seen in a newspaper. Truth itself becomes suspicious by being put into that polluted vehicle. The real extent of this state of misinformation is known only to those who are in situations to confront facts within their knowledge with the lies of the day. I really look with commiseration over the great body of my fellow-citizens, who, reading newspapers, live and die in the belief that they have known something of what has been passing in the world in their time; whereas the accounts they have read in newspapers are just as true a history of any other period of the world as of the present, except that the real names of the day are affixed to their fables. General facts may indeed be collected from them, such as that Europe is now at war, that Bonaparte has been a successful warrior, that he has subjected a great portion of Europe to his will, etc., etc.; but no details can be relied on. I will add, that the man who never looks into a newspaper is better informed than he who reads them; inasmuch as he who knows nothing is nearer to truth than he whose mind is filled with falsehood and errors. He who reads nothing will still learn the great facts, and the details are all false.

"Perhaps an editor might begin a reformation in some such way as this: Divide his paper into four chapters, heading the 1st. Truths, 2d. Probabilities, 3d. Possibilities, 4th. Lies. The first chapter would be very short, as it would contain little more than authentic papers, and information from such sources as the editor would be willing to risk his own reputation for their truth. The second would contain what, from a mature consideration of all circumstances, his judgment should con-

clude to be probably true. This, however, should rather contain too little than too much. The third and fourth should be professedly for those readers who would rather have lies for their money than the blank paper they would occupy."

Jefferson, however, knew the value of the press, and the services it *had* rendered. He wrote the passage just quoted after the great fight was over, and before the press had begun to recover from the demoralization which is one of the results of warfare. In 1793, when Washington seemed to wish Jefferson to dismiss Captain Freneau (democratic editor-in-chief) from the post of translating clerk to the Secretary of State (salary, two hundred and fifty dollars a year), Jefferson said to one of his intimates: "I won't turn him out. His paper has done more to save the democratic system than any thing else."

The period which I have called the "era of bad feeling," began with those game-cock encounters between Jefferson and Hamilton in the cabinet of General Washington, and continued, with yearly-increasing acrimony, till democracy and Jefferson triumphed in 1800. The struggle would naturally have lasted longer, for Federalism had immense advantages, and every new horror of the French Revolution was strength to the party that had always denounced it. The two circumstances which, more than all others, hastened the republican triumph, were, as it seems to me, Burr's management, and John Adams's want of management. The part which Burr played in effecting the discomfiture of Hamilton and his party, will be stated fully in the next chapter. Here, a few words respecting Adams may be permitted.

Glorious, delightful, honest John Adams! An American John Bull! The Comic Uncle of this exciting drama! The reader, if a play-goer, knows well the fiery old gentleman who goes blustering and thundering about the stage, grasping his stick till it quivers, throwing the lovers into a terrible consternaion, hurrying on the catastrophe he is most solicitous to prevent, pluming himself most of all upon his sagacity, while he alone is blind to what is passing under his very nose! Such is something like the impression left upon the mind of

one who becomes familiar with the characters of this period, respecting the man who, as Franklin well said, was always honest, often great, and sometimes mad. Think of a President of the United States, who, while his countrymen were in the temper of 1797 and 1798, could, in a public address, allude to his having had the *honor* once to stand in the presence of the British king! It is simply amusing now to read of his having done so; but, to the maddened Republicans of that era, it seemed the last degree of abject pusillanimity toward England, and arrogant insult to the people of America. Think also of a President of the United States who could see, without interference, a fellow-citizen prosecuted, convicted, and fined a hundred dollars, for *wishing* that the wadding of a certain cannon, fired to salute the President as he passed through Newark, had lodged upon an ample part of the President's ample person! One of his own cabinet told Hamilton that the "chief was a man who, whether sportful, playful, witty, kind, cold, drunk, sober, angry, easy, stiff, jealous, careless, cautious, confident, close, or open, is so almost always in the wrong place, and to the wrong persons." Alien laws, sedition laws, and stamp duties, came naturally enough to such a President.

John Adams must never be judged by his administration None of the men of the Revolution came out of the storm and stress of our era of bad feeling quite unscathed. It was too much for human nature In the revolutionary period, this high-mettled game-cock of a John Adams appeared to glorious advantage, made a splendid show of fight, animated the patriotic heart, and gave irresistible impetus to the cause. But he was ludicrously unfitted to preside with dignity and success over a popular government, which must do every thing with an eye to its effect upon the people. His own cabinet intrigued against him. They regarded Hamilton as their real chief; and Hamilton, far more than Adams, *was* the influencing mind of the government. One who would understand and like John Adams must read his Diaries and Letters; which, of all the writings of that time, are the most human and entertaining. Pickwick is not funnier. Pickwick, in the

office of prime minister of England, would not have been more the wrong man in the wrong place than John Adams was in the chair of Washington.

Adams and Hamilton agreed in one thing, abhorrence of he French Revolution; and in another, admiration of the English government; and in another, distrust of the masses of the people "You thought," said Adams to a correspondent, "the French Revolution a minister of grace: I knew it to be, from the first, a goblin damned." One of his letters to his wife contains a characteristic passage on equality. "By the law of nature," he writes, "all men are men, and not angels —men, and not lions—men, and not whales—men, and not eagles—that is, they are all of the same species; and this is the most that the equality of man amounts to. A physical inequality, an intellectual inequality, of the most serious kind, is established unchangeably by the Author of nature; and *society has a right to establish any other inequalities it may judge necessary for its good.* The precept, however, *do as you would be done by*, implies an equality which is the real equality of nature and Christianity."

In one word, John Adams was not in unison with the humor of the age; and, being a passionate, dogmatical, obstinate John Bull of a man, he took not the slightest pains to conceal the fact, or to conciliate the people with whom he had to do. During his presidency it was, that party animosities reached their height. He was elected by a very small plurality. The Republicans of 1796 were nearly as much elated and encouraged by their defeat as were the Republicans of 1856 by theirs. Events in France gave the President signal advantages, which another man would have turned to such account as to secure the supremacy of his party for years after. Adams continued to fan the flames of party spirit by all that he did, and by all that he did not do.

The state of public feeling in 1797 and 1798, may be inferred from these sentences from the letters of Thomas Jefferson: "The passions are too high at present to be cooled in our day. You and I have formerly seen warm debates and high political passions. But gentlemen of different politics

would then speak to each other, and separate the business of the Senate from that of society. It is not so now. Men who have been intimate all their lives, cross the street to avoid meeting, and turn their heads another way, lest they should be obliged to touch their hats." To another friend he writes. "At this moment, all the passions are boiling over, and one who keeps himself cool and clear of the contagion, is so far below the point of ordinary conversation that he finds himself insulated in every society." To another: "The interruption of letters is becoming so notorious, that I am forming a resolution of declining correspondence with my friends through the channels of the post-office altogether."

With these very miscellaneous and inadequate notices of the stirring and eventful period during which America became America, we must resume the story of the man whose diligence and tact assisted the people of the United States to realize their fond desire for a government which should truly represent *them*, and heartily execute *their* will.

CHAPTER XIV.

MEMBER OF THE ASSEMBLY AGAIN.

BURR RETIRES FROM THE SENATE — THE FEDERALISTS IN POWER — PRE-EMINENT POSITION OF HAMILTON — BURR IN THE ASSEMBLY — HIS PREPARATORY MANEUVERS — HAMILTON OPPOSES BURR'S APPOINTMENT TO A GENERALSHIP — THE ARMY — THE MANHATTAN BANK AFFAIR — BURR'S FIRST DUEL, AND ITS CAUSE.

IN *Greenleaf's New York Journal and Patriotic Register* for February 2d, 1797, amid whole pages ablaze with the victories of Bonaparte's Italian campaign, and bristling with the short, sharp bulletins and proclamations of that portentous conqueror, may still be seen a little paragraph which records, in the fewest words possible, an event of some interest to us, which had taken place in Albany *nine* days before. The paragraph reads thus: "On the 24th ult., Philip Schuyler was unanimously (excepting one vote in the Assembly and one in the Senate) elected to the office of Senator of the United States by the two Houses of the legislature of this State, for six years, from the 4th of March next, on which day the seat of Aaron Burr, one of our present Senators in Congress, becomes vacant."

The services of the old soldier, then, were recognized at last. The Federalists were in the ascendant, and the Republicans, as I conjecture, chose to gratify a war-worn veteran with their votes, rather than throw them away upon a candidate of their own party. Schuyler was touched with the unanimity of the vote. He was a member of the State Senate at the time, and he took occasion to express his feelings in a short speech, full of honest, manly feeling.

The Federalists, as just observed, were in the ascendant in the State of New York. John Jay was governor. He had recovered much of the popularity lost by negotiating that

famous treaty with Great Britain, for defending which on the stump Hamilton had been hooted and stoned in the streets of New York a year before. The party looked strong, and was trong. France had become a by-word and a taunt, to which the Republicans had hardly the faith or face to reply. The Federalists had only to use their victory in a conciliatory pirit, and the State was permanently their own.

One important loss, however, they had sustained, which led afterward to other damaging defections. The Livingstons had gone over, *en famille*, to the Republican party. The story is, that the family were chagrined, that Chancellor Livingston, who had powerfully assisted both to form the Constitution and to get it adopted, should have been overlooked in the distribution of the great offices; a circumstance which they attributed to the jealous enmity of Hamilton. The irate Chancellor, it is said, caused the family to be convened; and from that evening, it was observed, the Livingstons, except some remote and rural members of the family, voted and acted with the Republicans. Accordingly, we find the Chancellor, at the banquet given in New York in 1796, to celebrate the ninth anniversary of the alliance between France and the United States, offering the following toast: "May the present coolness between France and America produce, like the quarrels of lovers, a renewal of love."

If this account of the cause of Chancellor Livingston's change of politics be correct—and it is given by Dr. Hammond, the charitable historian of New York parties, on what he states to be high authority—it only proves that General Washington was right in thinking Chancellor Livingston an unfit person for the office of Chief Justice of the United States. Let us admit, however, that the opinion was general, at that time, that Hamilton used his influence with Washington to crush the enemies and rivals of the house of Schuyler, and it was doubtless trying to feudal human nature for the head of the Livingstons to see himself debarred from coveted distinction by a foreign adventurer's influential word.

Hamilton was now approaching the summit of his career. Triumphant in his own State, strengthened at Philadelphia by

the election of his father-in-law to the Senate, known to be the favorite of the nation's favorite, the unquestioned leader, though not the head of the dominant party, and the confidential adviser of the cabinet, Hamilton was playing a great part in the national affairs. It has been before remarked, that, during the first twelve years of the young nation's existence, it was he who really administered the government. For four years, as Secretary of the Treasury, he devised the great measures; for four years, as Washington's adviser and word-furnisher, as popular essayist and party-intriguer, he supported the system himself had created; for four years, his was the mind to which Mr. Adams's ministers looked for suggestion and advice. Candid John Adams, when all was over, declared, that during his presidency, Hamilton was "commander-in-chief of the House of Representatives, of the Senate, of the heads of Department, of General Washington, and last, and least, if you will, of the President of the United States." He had won distinction in many of the pursuits, wherein to excel is counted peculiarly honorable First, orator and pamphleteer; then soldier, lawyer, statesman, author, in swift succession, and in each capacity unrivaled. In society too, who so welcome as the young and handsome chief of the gentlemen's party, who knew how to lay aside in the drawing room the cares of State, and to charm the gentler sex with the grace of his manners, the sprightliness of his wit, the warmth of his homage? What wonder that the amiable man should have felt his importance. Let it be ever remembered, to his honor, that through all these years of success and glory, his most constant thought was for the supremacy of the *system* which he conscientiously believed to be essential to the prosperity, and even to the prolonged existence of the Union.

The election of Schuyler to the Senate could not, of course, take Colonel Burr by surprise. Before that event was announced, he had matured plans for getting the State of New York out of the hands of Hamilton and the Federalists. His first step was to secure his own election to the State legislature, which was the easier from the fact that the city, even then was more inclined than the rural counties to the demo-

cratic party. Accordingly, General Schuyler, about the time he was conning his speech of thanks to the State Senate for their suffrages, wrote to Hamilton, in alarm, to the following effect: "Mr. Burr, we are informed, will be a candidate for a seat in the Assembly; his views it is not difficult to appreciate. They alarm me, and if he prevails, *I apprehend a total change of politics in the next Assembly*—attended with other disagreeable consequences."

He did prevail. But nothing particular came of it, so far as could be seen by the uninitiated eye. In the years 1797 and 1798, Colonel Burr seemed absorbed in law and speculation. To a great extent he was so. His inactivity was even a subject of complaint with some members of the party; but it is probable that his unnoticed exertions during those two years contributed as much to the final victory as his more obvious efforts at a later day. With the people, a presidential campaign means merely the few months of turmoil just previous to the election; but the politician knows that the first three years of a presidential term, when the people are occupied with their own pursuits, is the period for *him* to maneuver in. This was more the case then than now, because then only freeholders voted, and leading individuals had far more control over votes than they can have where universal suffrage prevails. The fact, too, that presidential electors were chosen, not by the people, but by the legislature, gave an immense opportunity to a man skilled in political management.

In a political assembly, though on a test question one party may be sure of a majority, yet there will always be a certain number of men whose partizan feelings are weak, and who are therefore open to influence. It was upon these intermediate members that Colonel Burr knew how to play, particularly the influential country members, who brought to Albany the purest intentions, unsophisticated minds, and an inflammable vanity. A member of uncouth manners, and homespun dress, whom a dainty Federalist would have thought beneath his notice, Burr was aware might be the great man of a western county, and carry its vote in his pocket. Such a member, bursting with desire perhaps to hear his own voice in the

chamber, and to show his constituents his name in the newspapers, Colonel Burr would request to introduce a resolution, or to do some other formal business, that would flatter his sense of personal consequence. Judge Peck, for example, was subjected to this kind of treatment. Burr was extremely desirous, for a while, that the presidential electors should be chosen directly by the people, as he supposed the State could be more easily revolutionized in that way. Peck was selected to introduce the resolutions asking for a committee on the subject, though there were a dozen members better able to support them.

"Judge Peck," says Dr. Hammond,* "although a clear-headed, sensible man, was an uneducated emigrant from Connecticut. His appearance was diminutive, and almost disgusting. In religion he was fanatical, but in his political views he was sincere, persevering, and bold; and, though meek and humble in his personal demeanor, he was by no means destitute of personal ambition. He was an itinerant surveyor in the county of Otsego, then a new and uncultivated part of the State. He would survey your farm in the day time, exhort and pray in your family by night, and talk on politics the rest of the time. Perhaps on Sunday, or some evening in the week, he would preach a sermon in your school-house. No man knew better the political importance of such a man, in a society organized as the society of the western counties then was, than Colonel Burr, and he spared no pains to cause Mr. Peck to be identified with the Republican party. Various anecdotes have been related to me, which exhibit the care which Colonel Burr took to shape trifling matters in such a way as to act on the mind of Judge Peck and others, so as to produce the great result at which he aimed. The selection of Judge Peck to offer the electoral resolutions, flattered his vanity; it called out upon him the malediction of leading Federalists; and in that way widened the breach between him and his old political friends. Mr. Burr, it is said, with equal skill and perseverance, applied himself to General German, then a plain, but strong-minded and highly popular farmer of

* History of Political Parties in the State of New York.

Chenango. The support of the democratic cause by these two men was of great importance to the success of the Republican party in April, 1800. I do not think it too much to say, that had it not been for the papers circulated by Judge Peck and General German, and their personal exertion and influence, the western district, in the year 1800, would have been Federal."

The electoral scheme failed in the Senate, through the opposition of the Federal Senators, and nothing remained for the Republicans but to concentrate their efforts upon securing a Republican majority in the legislature to be chosen in April, 1800. Before entering upon that campaign, there are a few personal incidents of Burr's life at this period to be related.

In the summer of 1797, Monroe and Hamilton had an angry correspondence growing out of Hamilton's amour with Mrs. Reynolds. A duel at one time appeared inevitable, and Monroe named Colonel Burr as his second. The affair, however, was otherwise arranged.

In the winter of 1798, Colonel Burr sat in the Assembly at Albany, engaged in pushing private bills, and preparing the way for future operations. A grand *coup* which he had meant to try at this session, was, for reasons now unknown, deferred till the next.

The year 1798 was the time when the insolence of the French Directory toward the United States provoked the government to measures of retaliation, which, for the moment, were concurred in by a great majority of the people, and gave an imposing show of strength to the Federal party. An army was voted; General Washington was named commander-in-chief; Hamilton was made his second in command; a number of brigadiers were appointed. That there might be no sign wanting of coming war, a commercial revulsion set in, and the prisons, as Jefferson records, were full of the most reputable merchants. Hamilton, now inspector-general, was the foremost man of all the nation (for Washington was to take command only in case of actual hostilities), and about the first use he made of his new authority, was to defeat the honorable ambition of Colonel Burr for a military appoint-

ment. In the lately published tenth volume of the works of John Adams, there is a long letter upon Hamilton's intrigues, written in 1815, in which occurs the following statement respecting this matter:

"I have never known," wrote the ex-President, "in any country, the prejudice in favor of birth, parentage, and decent more conspicuous than in the instance of Colonel Burr That gentleman was connected by blood with many respectable families in New England. He was the son of one president, and the grandson of another president of Nassau Hall, or Princeton University; the idol of all the Presbyterians in New York, New England, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and elsewhere. He had served in the army, and came out of it with the character of a knight without fear, and an able officer. He had afterward studied and practiced law with application and success. Buoyed up on those religious partialities, and this military and juridical reputation, it is no wonder that Governor Clinton and Chancellor Livingston should take notice of him. They made him Attorney-General, and the legislature sent him to Congress, as a Senator, where he served, I believe, six years. At the next election he was, however, left out; and being at that time somewhat embarrassed in his circumstances, and reluctant to return to the bar, he would have rejoiced in an appointment in the army. In this situation, I proposed to General Washington, in a conference between him and me, and through him to the triumvirate (Washington, Hamilton, and Pinckney) to nominate Colonel Burr for a brigadier-general. Washington's answer to me was, 'By all that I have known and heard, Colonel Burr is a brave and able officer; but the question is, whether he has not equal talents at intrigue?' How shall I describe to you my sensations and reflections at that moment. He had compelled me to promote, over the heads of Lincoln, Clinton, Gates, Knox, and others, and even over Pinckney, one of his own triumvirates, the most restless, impatient, artful, indefatigable, and unprincipled intriguer in the United States, if not in the world, to be second in command under himself, and now dreaded an intriguer in a poor brigadier! He did, however,

ever, propose it to the triumvirate, at least to Hamilton. But I was not permitted to nominate Burr. If I had been, what would have been the consequences? Shall I say that Hamilton would have been now alive, and Hamilton and Burr now at the head of our affairs? What then? If I had nominated Burr without the consent of the triumvirate, a negative in Senate was certain."

The biographer of John Adams (the grandson of that impetuous old patriot), gives other particulars. He says that during the presidency of Mr. Adams, while the French excitement was at its height, and war seemed certain, Hamilton, Knox, and C. C. Pinckney were nominated as next in rank to General Washington in the army then forming. But it was left uncertain who of the three should be the second in command. The Federalists clamored for Hamilton. (Hamilton himself declared, in effect, that he would accept of nothing less.) The President invited Washington to decide the question. But between the general's preference for Hamilton, and his reluctance to wound the feelings of the veteran Knox, he hesitated so long that the intriguers of Adams's cabinet adopted an expedient to hasten his decision. "In the casual conversations of the cabinet," says Mr. Francis Adams, "the President had let drop some intimation of a wish to give a share of the commissions to leading military men of the opposition. Among the names mentioned by him were those of Aaron Burr, and Peter Muhlenburg, of Pennsylvania. Knowing the strong dislike entertained of the former by Washington, intimations were soon given him of the tendencies of the President, and the possibility that he might be liable to have Burr forced upon him as quarter-master-general, or in some other confidential post." This was enough. Hamilton was soon named second in command, and Knox resigned in disgust.

Thus, again, Hamilton triumphed, and in a signal manner, over his rival, whom, indeed, he seemed now to have finally distanced. From a story told by General Wilkinson, who visited New York about this time, we may infer that Hamilton himself had come to regard Burr in the light of a spent pe-

tician. Wilkinson paid his respects to General Hamilton as soon as he arrived in the city, when the following conversation took place between the two officers:

"Well, sir," said Wilkinson, "having fatigued you with my prattle, I now propose to visit an old friend whom I have not seen for several years; but I hope there is no disagreement between you which might render the renewal of my acquaintance with him indecorous to my superior officer."

Hamilton asked if he meant Colonel Lamb.

"No," said Wilkinson, "Colonel Burr."

"Little Burr!" exclaimed Hamilton, "O no; we have always been opposed in politics, but always on good terms. We set out in the practice of the law at the same time, and took opposite political directions. Burr beckoned me to follow him, and I advised him to come with me. We could not agree, but I fancy he now begins to think he was wrong and I was right."

This is in a different strain from the "*embryo Cæsar*" epistle of a few years before; but Hamilton was now talking to Burr's particular friend, his brother aid-de-camp in the Quebec expedition, and his confidential correspondent ever since. Besides, he only said he was on "good terms" with "little Burr." The tone of condescending superiority and conscious triumph in the words used by Hamilton in speaking of Burr, is the noticeable feature of Wilkinson's story.

At the next session of the legislature, 1799, Colonel Burr obtained a signal advantage over the wealthy Federalists of the city.

At that time there was, besides a branch of the Bank of the United States, but one banking institution in the city of New York, and that was controlled by Federalists, who, as the Republicans alleged, used their powers for the furtherance of the Federal cause. Both of these banks were, to a considerable degree, the creation of General Hamilton, and both were inclined to support and advance the author of their existence. The Republican merchants, it is said, had long been accustomed to see their Federal competitors "accommodated" by the banks, while their own applications for aid were supercil-

iously refused; and it was their cherished scheme to establish a bank which should be as complaisant toward them as the "Bank of New York" was supposed to be to traders of the other party. But this was difficult. Besides a chronic prejudice against banks in the popular mind, they had to contend against a Federal majority in the legislature, which alone could grant a charter. In these circumstances, Colonel Burr, by an ingenious maneuver, accomplished what, by direct means, could not have been done.

The yellow fever had recently made dreadful ravages in the city, and impressed upon the people the importance of securing a supply of better water than that furnished by the brackish wells in the lower part of the island. Burr availed himself of this state of public feeling. The legislature were asked to charter the *Manhattan Company*, formed for the ostensible purpose of supplying the city with water, but the real object of which was to supply Republicans with the sinews of war. It was uncertain, the petitioners said, how much capital the proposed water-works would require, but as it was highly desirable not to risk failure by a deficiency of capital, they asked authority to raise two millions of dollars. In all probability, they added, this would be too much, and, therefore, they proposed to insert in the charter a provision that "*the surplus capital might be employed in any way not inconsistent with the laws and Constitution of the United States, or of the State of New York.*" The bill passed both Houses as a matter of course, few members even so much as reading it, and none, except those who were in the secret, suspecting that "Manhattan Company" meant *Manhattan Bank*. Burr gained great applause among the leading Republicans for his adroitness in this affair, but he lost character with the people, and the act stands justly condemned in the records of the time.

These are the naked facts of the affair; but there were palliating circumstances, beside the alleged misuse of the capital of the other bank. It was proposed in the select committee of the Senate, to which the bill was referred, to strike out the clause relating to the use of the surplus capital; where-

upon a member of the committee applied to Colonel Burr for an explanation. Burr avowed the design of using the surplus capital to establish a bank, or an East India Company, or any thing else the directors might choose, since merely furnishing city of fifty thousand inhabitants with water would not remunerate the stockholders. The bill was afterward referred to the Chief Justice of the State, who advised its rejection on account of the unlimited powers conferred by the surplus clause. Means were found, however, to overrule his objections, and Governor Jay signed the bill. Nevertheless, the great fact remains, that, in this business, Colonel Burr sought one object under cover of another, a kind of political management which can never be commended, and seldom excused.

Whether any show was ever made of bringing in the water, does not appear; but the *bank* was immediately established, and soon became an institution of the first importance. And though it was one of the engines of Burr's political destruction, yet, in after years, when he was obscure and powerless, the Manhattan bank, as I have been told, was not unmindful of the man to whom it owed its establishment, and showed him favors which it would not have granted to any other in his situation.

The immediate effect of the Manhattan affair was injurious to the Republican party. In the spring of 1799, Burr was a candidate for reëlection to the Assembly, but before the election occurred, the secret of the Manhattan company escaped, and a prodigious clamor arose. A pamphlet appeared denouncing banks in general, and in particular the means by which Burr had sprung a new one upon a bank-fearing city. The newspapers took up the story, and meetings denounced the dexterous maneuver. The result was, that Burr lost his election, and, what was worse, the whole Republican ticket was defeated, and the Republican cause, which before had been gaining ground, received an ominous check. This was the more serious from the fact that, in twelve months more, the legislature was to be elected upon which would devolve the duty of choosing presidential electors!

In the summer of 1799, Colonel Burr fought his first duel. There was a piece of scandal set afloat in the State, to the effect that, for legislative services rendered, the Holland Land Company had canceled a bond held against Burr for twenty thousand dollars. A gentleman named John B. Church, had spoken with so much freedom respecting the rumor, as to elicit from the slandered legislator a challenge to mortal combat. At Hoboken, on the 2d of September, the parties met, attended by their seconds and a surgeon. A ridiculous incident varied the well-known routine of the proceedings, and furnished the town-gossip with a joke and a by-word for many a day. Before leaving home, Colonel Burr had been particular to explain to his second, Judge Burke, of South Carolina, that the balls were cast too small for his pistols, and that chamois leather, cut to the proper size, must be greased and put round them to make them fit. Leather and grease were placed in the case with the pistols. After the principals had been placed, Burr noticed Judge Burke vainly endeavoring to drive in the ramrod with a stone, and at once suspected that the grease had been forgotten. A moment after, the pistol was handed to him. With that singular coolness which he was wont to exhibit at critical moments, he drew the ramrod, felt of the ball, and told the judge it was not home.

"I know it," replied the second, wiping the perspiration from his face, "I forgot to grease the leather; but, you see, your man is ready; don't keep him waiting. Just take a crack as it is, and I'll grease the next."

Shots were exchanged without effect. Mr. Church then made the requisite apology, and the parties returned to the city in the highest good humor.

This affair of the Holland Company's bond was never explained to the public by Colonel Burr, though the means of doing so were at hand. He never in his life took pains to refute a calumny in a public manner, or showed much regard for what is called public opinion. This was both a point of pride and a constitutional peculiarity. It was a quality which alone must, some time or other, have made him an unavailable can-

didate for an office in the gift of the people; for the attainment of popularity in a republic, is a study, a pursuit, a thing about which a man must never be careless. Hence in republics, after the old virtue is exhausted, and before the new virtue acquires strength, only nonentities and hypocrites are available; since, to true men, the very idea of seeking popularity is loathsome. Burr was not, indeed, a downright *straight-forward* politician, such as every one admires and no one supports; but he never descended to the mean arts of making personal capital.

With regard to this scandal, he had but to show that the canceling of the bond was a perfectly legitimate transaction, by which he lost, not gained—facts known to half a dozen persons whose word no one would have doubted—and it would never more have been mentioned to his discredit. But this slight concession his pride refused. To a friend who asked for an explanation, he stated the facts of the case, and added these words: "This, sir, is the first time in my life that I have condescended (pardon the expression) to refute a calumny. I leave it to my actions to speak for themselves, and to my character to confound the fictions of slander. And on this very subject I have not up to this hour given one word of explanation to any human being. All the explanation that can be given amounts to no more than this—*That the thing is an absolute and abominable lie.*"

It does not appear that his silence with regard to the rumor did any perceptible damage to Burr at the time. Before his own party his character shone with all its previous luster, and no well-informed Federalist could believe a story so groundless and improbable. Nevertheless, *any* whisper against man's honor, whether probable or improbable, whether believed or scouted, prepares the way for the slanders that blast his good name for ever.

The circumstances of Colonel Burr at this time were, as Mr Adams stated, embarrassed. This was chiefly owing to the unfortunate issue of certain land speculations in which he had participated, and to his devotion to politics. His practice, however, was so large that, with proper care and average for-

tune, he would have recovered his losses, and founded an estate. But just now, more than ever, there was a demand for all the resources of his mind in preparing for the impending struggle between the two great parties. To this contest he had devoted himself.

CHAPTER XV.

THE ELECTION OF 1800.

Gloomy Prospects of the Republicans — Burr Confident — Federal Errors — Arrest of Judge Peck — Hamilton's Scheme for Cheating the People — John Adams's Narrative — Burr's Tactics — He Wins over General Gates — Judge Livingston and Governor Clinton — Hamilton and Burr at the Polls — The Victory — Hamilton's Unworthy Expedients — Burr Frustrates them — The Tie Between Jefferson and Burr

It was Aaron Burr who taught the democratic party how to conquer.

The prospect was gloomy. As the time for choosing presidential electors drew near, it became apparent that the State of New York would decide the contest in the Union, and that the city would decide the contest in the State. To every leading Republican in the country, except one, defeat looked inevitable. John Jay, in 1798, had been elected governor over Chancellor Livingston by a majority of 2,382, which was then a great majority. In 1799, the Republican ticket in the city, headed by the name of Aaron Burr, had been defeated by a majority of 900. In April, 1800, the electing legislature was to be chosen. Jefferson might well say, as he did say, one month before the New York election, that he considered the contest *more* doubtful than that of 1796. But Burr would not admit the idea of failure. He breathed the fire of his own sanguine disposition into the hearts of his followers, and kept every faculty on the alert to take instant advantage of the enemy's mistakes.

His house became the rendezvous of the more ardent and resolute members of the party, who were proud of their chief, and confident that in the abounding resources of his ingenious intellect alone lay the means of victory. Mr. Davis tells us that this devoted band was composed of young men of gal

lant bearing and disinterested views, who beheld in Colonel Burr a patriot hero of the Revolution, who had mingled with their fathers on the battle-field, and periled his all in their country's cause. In this circle no local or personal interests were allowed to be discussed. One object alone was ever mentioned or considered, and that was the triumph of the Republican party. The talents, the energy, the reckless courage, and the reckless generosity of the young politicians, whom the fascinating manner and chivalrous sentiments of Colonel Burr had attracted and leagued around him, are testified to by many writers of the time.

Then it was that the party began to submit to that *discipline* which gave it twenty-five years of victory. "All who numbered themselves as its members," says Professor Renwick (*Life of De Witt Clinton*), "were required to yield implicit obedience to the will of its majority; that majority was made to move at the beck of committees, which concentrated the power in the hands of a few individuals. Denunciation as a traitor was the fate of him who ventured to act in conformity to his individual opinion, when it did not meet with the general sanction." This omnipotent organization was not completed in a campaign, but it began in 1799, and grew out of the precepts and the example of Aaron Burr and his 'myrmidons.'

The efforts of Burr and his friends were most opportunely assisted by the errors of the Federalists. The government was exasperating a loyal nation by its stringent enforcement of the Alien and Sedition Laws. Thirty thousand Frenchmen and five thousand "United Irishmen," refugees from political storms at home, now felt themselves unsafe in the land which had been extolled as the asylum for the oppressed of all nations. They were loud and furious against the law which empowered the President to banish aliens whom *he* should deem dangerous to the peace of the United States. Among the victims of the Sedition Law was the pious politician, Judge Peck, who was prosecuted for merely *circulating* a bitterly-worded *petition* for the repeal of the odious laws. Nothing better could have happened for the Republicans. A bench-

warrant was issued. Peck was arrested in Otsego, and conveyed all the way to New York, affording to the State an unparalleled and rousing spectacle. "A hundred missionaries in the cause of democracy," remarks Dr. Hammond, "stationed between New York and Cooperstown, could not have done so much for the Republican cause as the journey of Judge Peck, as a prisoner, from Otsego to New York. It was nothing less than the public exhibition of a suffering martyr for the freedom of speech and the press, and the right of petitioning, to the view of the citizens of the various places through which the marshal traveled with his prisoner."

Yet such was the horror of democracy in the northern States, after the total failure of the French Revolution, and such was the strength of old habits and ideas, that even events like these were not sufficient to change the politics of the nation.

But there was trouble brewing between the Federal leaders. In spite of his cabinet, Mr. Adams had made peace with France, and thus frustrated the military aspirations of General Hamilton. Besides, Adams was a most unmanageable man. He did not like Hamilton, and Hamilton could not endure him, and was determined, by fair means or by foul, to get rid of him. By fair means, this could not have been done, for, in New England, the home and stronghold of Federalism, Adams was the strongest man. Hamilton's scheme was, that John Adams and C. C. Pinckney should be the Federal candidates for President and Vice-President, but Pinckney should, by secret maneuvers, be made to receive a vote or two more than Adams, and thus be elected to the first office. *The people were to be deliberately cheated.* They were to be deluded with the idea, that, while voting for certain legislators, they were voting John Adams into a second term of the Presidency; but their votes were really to have the effect of putting Adams back again into the Vice-Presidency, and of making General Pinckney President!

John Adams's own graphic version of the story is as follows: "Hamilton made a journey to Boston, Providence, etc., to persuade the people and their legislatures, but without suc-

cess, to throw away some of their votes, that Adams might not have the unanimous vote of New England; consequently, that Pinckney might be brought in as President, and Adams as Vice-President. Washington was dead, and the Cincinnati were assembled at New York to choose Hamilton for their new President. Whether he publicly opened his project to the whole assembly of the Cincinnati or not, I will not say; but of this I have such proof as I can not doubt, namely, that he broached it privately to such members as he could trust; for the learned and pious doctors, Dwight and Badcock, who, having been chaplains in the army, were then attending as two reverend knights of the order, with their blue ribbons and bright eagles at their sable button-holes, were heard to say repeatedly in the room where the society met, '*We must sacrifice Adams*,' '*We must sacrifice Adams*.' Of this fact I have such evidence that I should dare to appeal, if it were worth while, to the only survivor, Dr. Dwight, of New Haven University.

"About the same time, walking in the streets of Philadelphia, I met on the opposite sidewalk, Colonel Joseph Lyman, of Springfield, one of the most amiable men in Congress, and one of the most candid men in the world. As soon as he saw me he crossed over to my side of the street, and said, 'Sir, I cross over to tell you some news.' 'Ay! what news? I hope it is good!' 'Hamilton has divided the Federalists, and proposed to them to give you the go-by, and bring in Pinckney. By this step he has divided the Federalists, and given great offense to the honestest part of them. I am glad of it, for it will be the ruin of his faction.' My answer was, 'Colonel Lyman, it will be, as you say, the ruin of his faction; but it will also be the ruin of honester men than any of them. And with these words I marched on, and left him to march the other way.'

"I was soon afterward informed, by personal witnesses and private letters, that Hamilton had assembled a meeting of the citizens and made an elaborate harangue to them. He spoke of the President, John Adams, with respect! But with what respect, I leave you, sir, to conjecture. Hamilton soon after

called another and more secret caucus to prepare a list of representatives for the city of New York, in their State legislature, who were to choose electors of President and Vice-President. He fixed upon a list of his own friends, people of little weight or consideration in the city or the country. Burr, who had friends in all circles, had a copy of this list brought to him immediately. He read it over, with great gravity folded it up, put it in his pocket, and without uttering another word, said, '*Now I have him hollow.*' "

And he really *had* him hollow. In a moment, the means of carrying the city, upon which all depended, flashed upon his mind, and he proceeded forthwith to execute the scheme.

His first step was to prepare a list of candidates to represent the city in the Assembly. But a difficulty arose at the very outset: Hamilton's whole heart was in this election, and it was certain that he would take an active personal part in the campaign; and that, particularly, during the three days of the election, his harangues to the people would be more effective than ever before. Burr, too, must be on the ground. It was also thought indispensable to the complete success of the plan, that he should be a member of the legislature. But if his name were on the city ticket, it would neutralize his exertions, as he would seem to be electioneering and haranguing for himself. Some votes would also be diverted from the Republican side by the recollection of Burr's agency in the Manhattan Bank affair. In this dilemma, it was suggested that he should be a candidate for the Assembly in Orange county, where he was better known and more popular than in any other county. This part of the plan was confided to influential Democrats of that county, and, it may as well be stated at once, was successful.

This matter disposed of, the city ticket was drawn up. With matchless audacity, Burr proposed to his confederates the following persons as candidates for the Assembly. At the head of his ticket, he placed the name of George Clinton, so long the Governor of the State, now retired from all public employments, and declining into the vale of years. Next came the name, not less distinguished, of the conqueror

of Burgoyne, General Horatio Gates. Then followed Samuel Osgood, Henry Rutgers, Elias Neusen, Thomas Storm, George Warner, Philip J. Arcularius, James Hunt, Ezekiel Robbins, Brockholst Livingston, and John Swartwout; all of them gentlemen who, for one reason or another, added peculiar strength to the ticket. Osgood, for example, had been a member of Congress, and Washington's Postmaster-General, and was a man of the highest estimation in the city. Livingston was a very eminent lawyer, afterward Judge of the Supreme Court of the United States. He was a son of that Governor of New Jersey whose noble eulogy of Burr's father I have elsewhere quoted. Swartwout, very popular for his manly bearing and amiable qualities, was Burr's most devoted friend. The name of Rutgers is still familiar in a New Yorker's ear, as it lives in that of the street where he resided. In a word, Burr's ticket, from the celebrity of some of its names, the eminent respectability of others, and the peculiar popularity of the rest, was the strongest ever offered for the popular suffrages in this State. Above all, it was an obvious and striking contrast to Hamilton's.

To draw up an imposing catalogue of names is not a difficult feat. To induce those gentlemen to stand was a matter beset with difficulties, such as, perhaps, no man in the world could have overcome but Aaron Burr. The consent of the nine less known persons was obtained without much trouble. But Clinton, Livingston, and Gates, each representing a faction of the great Republican party, each with personal aims, claims and jealousies, neither disposed to act with the others, were, for a long time, deaf to arguments and to entreaties, and immovable in their resolve not to allow their names to be used. Gates was one of Burr's peculiar adherents, and extremely averse to Hamilton and Schuyler, with whom he had been ill friends ever since the time of the cabal in the revolutionary war. Yet neither his friendship for Burr nor his enmity to Schuyler, nor his party spirit, nor all these together were strong enough to overcome his repugnance to being a candidate. Livingston proved the most tractable. After repeated interviews, Burr wrung from him a reluctant consent

to run, *provided* Governor Clinton and General Gates were candidates also.

This was a great point gained. Burr now applied himself to Gates with redoubled energy. There are vague traditions that the art with which Burr worked upon the foibles and judgment of Gates was among the finest displays of his peculiar talent. When all other expedients failed, he resorted to importunate persuasions, and the general was induced at last to say that he would stand, if Governor Clinton would.

But Clinton was the hardest case of all. Clinton's friends called him a very firm man; his opponents thought him very obstinate. His portrait shows the strong, downright, immovable, north-Ireland character of the man. He had thick bushy eye-brows, a well developed lower face and double chin, a closed large mouth, a scrutinizing look out of the eyes, a good medium forehead, with his scanty gray hair combed up to hide its bald summit. It is the plain, shaggy-looking face of an honest, wary north-of-Irelander. Now Clinton himself had pretensions to the presidency. In 1793, when he received fifty electoral votes out of a hundred and thirty-two, and Jefferson had but four, it was Clinton, not Jefferson, that seemed to be on the high road to the presidential mansion. The reasons that induce a party to change its standard-bearer seldom convince the man who is displaced. In a word, George Clinton did not like Thomas Jefferson. He was now solicited to stand for the Assembly, for the sole purpose of helping Jefferson into the presidential chair; and he was asked to do this by the man who, though a stripling aid-de-camp when George Clinton was the foremost man of the State, and a person of national importance, had in 1797 received thirty electoral votes to Clinton's four! Governor Clinton was an able and patriotic man, but such personal considerations as these have an influence over all but the very best of the species.

Burr never had a harder task than to win over this strong, prejudiced, determined man to the purposes of the party. Clinton said that he did not think highly of Jefferson's statesmanship, and had not faith in his sincerity as a Republican, nor even in his integrity as a man. He thought him a *trimmer*,

and so thinking, he said he could not conscientiously support him for the highest office. "But," said the governor, on one occasion, "if you, Mr. Burr, were the candidate for the presidential chair, I would act with pleasure, and with vigor." To such objections as these, Burr replied in his mild, persuasive way, with not the smallest appearance of effect. Committees and sub-committees and individuals, by turns, besieged the governor's ear, for three days. There was a final interview at length, between the governor and the nominating committee, at Burr's own house. All the old arguments were used, and new ones offered. The committee expostulated, and the committee entreated, but the tough old soldier stood to his purpose with a pertinacity worthy of his race. Burr then said, that it was a right inherent in a community to *command* the services of an individual at a great crisis, and declared the intention of the party to nominate and elect Governor Clinton, without regard to his inclination. The governor at last made this slight concession, that he would not publicly repudiate the nomination. He afterward agreed that, during the canvass, he would refrain, in his ordinary conversation, from denouncing Jefferson in the style that had become habitual to him. The old man was true to his promise, but neither he nor his rising nephew, De Witt Clinton, nor his son, nor any of his connections, personally assisted in the campaign, as they had been wont to do in previous contests.

The curtain was now lifted. A public meeting under imposing auspices was held, at which the ticket was announced and ratified with enthusiasm. It gave life and hope to the despairing Republicans. It alarmed the Federalists, who, till now, had been confident of a victory.

In arranging the details of the campaign, Burr's skillful hand was employed with good effect. The finance committee had prepared a list of the wealthy Republicans, with the sum which they proposed to solicit attached to each name. On looking over the list, Colonel Burr observed that a certain rich man, equally remarkable for zeal and parsimony, was assessed one hundred dollars.

"Strike out his name," said Burr, "for you will not get the

money; and from the moment the demand is made upon him, his exertions will cease, and you will not see him at the polls during the election."

The name was erased. Lower down in the catalogue, he noticed the same sum placed opposite the name of another man who was liberal with his money, but incorrigibly lazy.

"Double it," said he, "and tell him no labor will be expected from him, except an occasional attendance in the committee-rooms to help fold the tickets. He will pay you the two hundred dollars, and thank you for letting him off so easily."

This was done. The result, in both cases, proved the truth of Burr's prediction. The lazy man paid the money without a demur, and the zealous man worked day and night.

Last of all, Colonel Burr devoted himself to operating directly on the public mind. He provided for a succession of ward and general meetings, most of which he himself attended and addressed. He kept the canvass all alive by his indefatigable activity. He declared everywhere that the party really had a majority in the city; and it was only necessary to awaken such an interest in the election as would draw out every Republican vote, and the victory was theirs. This was no random assertion. By means of lists of the voters, with the political history of each, appended in parallel columns, which were incessantly added to and corrected, as new information was obtained, he had reduced the important department of political prophecy almost to certainty. He would have made it quite certain, but for circumstances which, though they often decide elections, can not, in the nature of things, be foretold. The weather of election day is one of these. In Burr's lists, not only a man's opinions were noted, but his degree of zeal, his temperament, his health, his habits, all these things were taken into account, to ascertain what quantity of excitement or inducement was necessary to overcome the fatal propensity of the comfortable citizen to neglect voting. Thus, on one occasion, when Colonel Burr was running for office, and the first two days of the election had passed without either candidate getting a decided advantage, he said, "If it is a fine day to-morrow I shall get a small majority in the city; if not,

not." The day was fine, and the event justified his confident prediction. The leaders of the party in the city, knowing the accuracy and extent of his information, received his prophecies of success on the present occasion more as information than as prediction. They were buoyant with hope, that the party, after twelve years of defeat, was now on the eve of a national triumph.*

The polls opened on the morning of April 29th, and closed at sunset on the 2d of May. During these three days, the exertions of both parties were immense. Hamilton was in the field animating his followers with his powerful declamation. Burr addressed large assemblages of Republicans. Sometimes both champions appeared on the same platform, and addressed the multitude in turn, upon the questions in dispute. On these occasions, their bearing toward one another was so gracefully courteous, as to be remembered by many in the crowd they addressed, long after the matter of their speeches was forgotten.

The contest closed. Before the rival chiefs slept on the night of the 2d of May, the news was brought to them that the Republicans had carried the city by a majority of 490 votes.

Hamilton was not prepared for defeat, and the news struck him like a blow. Nothing but some desperate expedient

* Colonel Knapp, author of a short memoir of Burr, written in a friendly spirit, says a few words respecting the manner of Burr's intercourse with the party out of doors, which may be quoted here. I copy it the more willingly, because the great mass of what I quote from others respecting Burr was conceived in enmity or repugnance to him. "Colonel Burr," says Mr. Knapp, "never courted the mob by mingling with them, and sharing their movements; for it was seldom they met him. He made no converts by *pewter mug* stories, and they liked him the better for all this abstraction from the great body of democracy; but whenever he came in contact with the humblest of his admirers, it was well known that he treated them so blandly that his manners were remembered when the whole conversation was forgotten. His manners were the most courtly of any one of his age. He had not the parade of Morris, nor the gravity of Jay; but he never for a moment forgot himself by assumption or too much familiarity. The self-possession which he always sustained gave him great advantages over other men who are vassals to their passions, and at times can not hide their weaknesses."

could now save the Union from falling into the hands of the Philistines; and in the frenzy of his disappointment he resolved upon trying a desperate expedient.

The next day, while the city was in the first flush of excitement at the news, Hamilton called together a few of the most influential Federalists, and laid before them his scheme; which was, to induce Governor Jay to call an extra session of the old legislature (whose term of service had still eight weeks to run), for the purpose of changing the mode of choosing presidential electors. Two years before, Burr had attempted to carry a bill through the legislature, providing that the electors should be chosen directly by the people, voting by districts. His object, since he then despaired of getting a Republican majority in the legislature, was to secure *part* of the electoral college of the State for the democratic candidate at the next presidential election. The Federalists saw his object, and defeated it, though a juster measure was never proposed. Hamilton, a sudden convert to this policy, was now bent on accomplishing, by unworthy means, what Colonel Burr had honorably endeavored before him. The Federal caucus jumped at the mean expedient, and Hamilton, the next day, wrote an elaborate letter to the governor, unfolding the plan, and urging its instant execution.

The anti-Federal party, he wrote, was a composition of very incongruous materials, but *all of them tending to mischief;* some to the emasculation of the government, others to revolutionizing it in the style of Bonaparte. The government must not be confided to the custody of its enemies. True, the measure proposed was open to objection. But a popular government could not stand if one party called to its aid all the resources which vice could give, and the other, however pressing the emergency, felt itself obliged to confine itself within the ordinary forms of delicacy and decorum. These forms were valuable; but they ought not to hinder the taking of a step strictly legal and constitutional, to prevent *an atheist in religion and a fanatic in politics* from getting possession of the helm of State.

The letter was dispatched. Judge of the consternation of

its author and his caucus when they read, in a Republican newspaper *of the following day*, a full exposure of the scheme, including an account of the caucus, its proceedings, and the measure it had concluded to recommend. The public read this article with incredulity. Even the Federal editors, who were not in the secret, denounced it as the basest of slanders. "Where is the American," exclaimed one of them, "who will not detest the author of this infamous lie? If there is a man to be found who will sanction this publication, he is worse than the worst of Jacobins!" No doubt, many a Federalist went to his grave in the belief that the story was a weak invention of the enemy. Among the papers of Governor Jay, Hamilton's letter was found, with this honest indorsement, in the governor's hand: "*Proposing a measure for party purposes, which I think it would not become me to adopt.*" For *party* purposes, says the candid governor, summarily disposing of Hamilton's self-deceiving array of fine motives.

That Hamilton should have deliberately made such a proposal, shows more than the limitedness of his understanding, and his ignorance of the state of things in which he lived. It shows that, with all his gentlemanliness of demeanor and feeling, he was not a *thorough-bred* gentleman; a character, the distinguishing and essential quality of which is, a love of FAIR PLAY. He had, of his own free will, gone down into the arena, and accepted battle on the known and usual conditions. He was beaten fairly. Then he attempted, by a secret and unworthy maneuver, to steal the laurel from the victor's brow while he slept.

But the victor was not asleep. Before the election, Burr had obtained an intimation from some quarter that if the Republicans should carry the city, means would be found to deprive them of the fruits of their triumph. Upon this hint he acted. From the moment the polls closed every movement was watched. The counting of the votes was closely scrutinized. The goings and comings of the leading Federalists were observed, and thus the meeting of the caucus was ascertained, and its schemes exposed and baffled. The particular means by which the proceedings of the caucus were discovered, I

nave not been able to ascertain The whisper at the time was that Hamilton and Burr were both enamored of the same frail woman, who really loved Burr, but endured Hamilton only that she might beguile him of secrets with which to ingratiate herself with his rival. I utterly disbelieve this wretched gossip. Nearly every such tale of noted men proves, when examined, to be a fable. Neither Hamilton nor Burr was blameless toward women; but neither of them, I am sure, ever addicted himself to the kind of debauchery which is implied in the story referred to.

The news of the result of the New York election took the country by surprise. To Jefferson all eyes were now turned as the man destined soon to wield the power and patronage of the government. The Federalists had been so long accustomed to conquer, and the Republicans to be only a vehement, despised, and hopeless opposition, that the probability of the two parties changing positions, produced an effect which may be imagined. Mr. Jefferson, in one of his letters to Dr. Rush, records the effect of the startling intelligence upon the mind of President Adams.

"On the day," wrote Jefferson, "on which we learned in Philadelphia the vote of the city of New York, which it was well known would decide the vote of the State, and that again the vote of the Union, I called on Mr. Adams on some official business. He was very sensibly affected, and accosted me with these words: 'Well, I understand that you are to beat me in this contest, and I will only say that I will be as faithful a subject as any you will have.'

"'Mr. Adams,' said I, 'this is no personal contest between you and me. Two systems of principles, on the subject of government, divide our fellow-citizens into two parties. With one of these you concur, and I with the other. As we have been longer on the public stage than most of those now living, our names happen to be more generally known. One of these parties, therefore, has put your name at its head, the other mine. Were we both to die to-day, to-morrow two other names would be in the place of ours, without any change in

the motion of the machinery. Its motion is from its principle, not from you or myself.'

"'I believe you are right,' said he, 'that we are but passive instruments, and should not suffer this matter to affect our personal dispositions.'"

Hamilton did not yet despair. One of his first letters, written after the loss of New York, concedes the probability of a Republican success, but he adds that his scheme of secretly supporting Pinckney for the presidency, instead of Adams, "is the only thing that can save us from the fangs of Jefferson." A few days after, he writes to the same friend, that "under Adams, as under Jefferson, the government will sink." A week or two later, to another gentleman, he quotes Franklin's character of Adams ("always honest, sometimes great, but often mad"), and adds that Adams is honest indeed, but only "as far as a man excessively vain and jealous, and *ignobly* attached to *place*, can be." Thenceforth Hamilton's efforts were directed to the single object of concentrating upon Pinckney the entire strength of the Federal party, north and south. For this he schemed, and wrote, and talked, and toiled, and traveled during the summer and autumn of 1800. But he had a nimble, a dexterous, a sleepless adversary.

Toward the close of the summer, Hamilton prepared a pamphlet, in which he stated his reasons for objecting to the reëlection of the President, descanting freely upon his public conduct, and his personal infirmities. This pamphlet was entitled: "A Letter from Alexander Hamilton, concerning the Public Conduct and Character of John Adams, Esquire, President of the United States." It was designed, first, to serve as a circular letter to very confidential friends in New England, and, secondly, to be disseminated extensively in the South, particularly in South Carolina, at so late a period of the canvass that the double-play could not be known at the North till the election was over. The pamphlet was sent to the printer, under the most stringent stipulations that the work should be executed secretly, and every copy delivered into Hamilton's own hands. The story goes, that Colonel Burr, who was ever an early riser, was walking in the streets

near Hamilton's house, very early one morning, when he met a boy carrying a covered basket.

"What have you there, my lad?" asked Burr, who was prone to accost young people that he met in the streets.

"Pamphlets for General Hamilton," replied the boy, not knowing their importance.

Burr asked for one, and the boy complied without hesitation. Burr took the pamphlet, and, at one glance, saw what a prize chance had thrown in his way. This is the current *story;* but it is improbable. Mr. Davis merely says, that Colonel Burr, having ascertained that such a pamphlet was in press, made "arrangements" for procuring a copy as soon as the printing should be completed. How he obtained the pamphlet is, therefore, uncertain, but the essential fact remains, that he obtained it.

In the evening of the same day, he summoned to his house three of his confederates, John Swartwout, Robert Swartwout, and M. L. Davis, to whom he read the pamphlet, and unfolded the plan he had formed of hurling it, a hissing bomb-shell, into the camp of the enemy. He simply proposed to give the leading contents of the pamphlet sudden and universal publicity. Extracts were accordingly made on the spot, and Davis was charged with the duty of procuring their simultaneous insertion in one of the principal Republican journals of New England, and in the *Aurora* of Philadelphia. The extracts appeared. They produced all the effect the bitterest enemy of the Federal party could have desired. Astonishment and incredulity, by turns, beset the Federal intellect, but the publication of new passages, from time to time, together with the popular recognition of Hamilton's style, soon banished all doubt that the great leader had been playing a double game. He thought it best, at length, to publish the pamphlet entire, and a few days before the presidential electors were to be chosen it appeared.

This exposure destroyed the last hope of the Federalists. "It rent the party in twain," as a writer truly observes. A month after the pamphlet appeared, William Duane, editor of the *Aurora*, that terror of the respectable Federalists, sent

a copy of it to General Collot, of Paris. Chance preserved that copy, and, within these few years, brought it back to the United States, with the note that originally accompanied it, which reads thus:

"CITIZEN-GENERAL.—This pamphlet has done more mischief to the parties concerned, than all the labors of the *Aurora*. WILLIAM DUANE."

Adams said of it, that "if the single purpose had been to defeat the President, no more propitious moment could have been chosen." And again: "One thing I know, that Cicero was not sacrificed to the vengeance of Antony by the unfeeling selfishness of the latter triumvirate, more egregiously than John Adams was to the unbridled ambition of Alexander Hamilton in the American triumvirate!"

John Adams was, indeed, so thoroughly disgusted with Hamilton's treason to the head of his party, that, down to a late period of his life, he could seldom write his name without adding to it an epithet of repugnance. Burr he always mentions with respect.

Hamilton's conduct in this business was utterly unjustifiable. Not a thousand voters in the country had so much as thought of Pinckney for President. In the newspapers, and the public meetings, Adams, and only Adams, was named as the Federal candidate for the first office. Hamilton's intrigue was therefore a design to frustrate the people's will by putting into the presidential chair a man who had not even been named for the office before the people. Two palliating circumstances, however, may be mentioned. One is that Hamilton, being a Tory by nature, had really no conception of what Democrats mean by the *rights of the people*. Another is, that, at that day, presidential electors were not quite the mere formality they have since become; but were supposed to have, in some degree, a right of choice. It may also be said of Alexander Hamilton, that if he intrigued dishonorably, he did so from an honorable motive. Of his rival, we may say, that he intrigued, for the most part, honorably and for good purposes, but without being animated by public spirit. No one, I think, can long read the writings of Hamilton without feeling himself to

be in contact with a nature essentially good; but narrow and inflexible for that expanding age; that era of hope, idea, and invention; that glorious dawn of a better Day than the world has ever known. He saw that democracy is a resolving of society back again into its original elements! Democracy is chaos he would say. True, Democracy contending with Privilege is chaos. But after chaos comes CREATION!

A President and Vice-President were now to be chosen by the electors. Among the Republicans there was but one name mentioned for the first office, and that was Thomas Jefferson. But for the second there were competitors. In those days, what we now accomplish by nominating conventions, was done by party caucuses of the members of Congress. A few days after the news of the great New York election reached Philadelphia, a Republican caucus was held for the purpose of deciding upon a candidate for the vice-presidency. A nomination was equivalent to an election, and the caucus therefore proceeded cautiously. At the first meeting it was only settled that the candidate should be selected from New York, as it was New York that had just made the final victory more than probable. A gentleman was appointed to converse with the leading politicians of that State and report to the caucus their preferences. The choice, it was found, lay between three men, Chancellor Livingston, George Clinton, and Aaron Burr. It was at once concluded that Chancellor Livingston's deafness was an insuperable objection to an officer who would have to preside over a deliberative body, and he was set aside. Clinton and Burr were the two remaining. Of the negotiation which resulted in the selection of Burr various accounts have been given. The probable version is that George Clinton desired the nomination, and that his family and friends demanded it for him; but that the Burrites, urging the palpable fact, that to Burr, and Burr alone, the democratic victory was due, claimed it strenuously for their chief. In '96, they might have urged, he had received thirty electoral votes; and as the party used his name when success was scarcely hoped for by the most sanguine, it was but fair that it should be taken up when success was nearly certain. Burr was nomi-

nated. Clinton was soon after elected once more to the gov ernorship of the State.

Hamilton was dreadfully embittered against Burr by the events of this summer. The rage of his "faction," says John Adams, "appeared to me then, and has ever since appeared, an absolute delirium." In August, we find Hamilton writing to his friend Bayard, of Delaware, in the following strain upon the prospects of the campaign:

"There seems to be," said he, "too much probability that Jefferson or Burr will be President. The latter is intriguing with all his might in New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Vermont; and there is a possibility of some success in his intrigues. He counts positively on the universal support of the anti-Federalists; and that by some adventitious aid from other quarters, he will overtop his friend Jefferson. Admitting the first point, the conclusion may be realized, and, if it is so, Burr will certainly attempt to reform the government *à la Buonaparte*. He is as unprincipled and dangerous a man as any country can boast—as true a Catiline as ever met in midnight conclave."

Hamilton's assertions respecting the movements and character of his opponents, are absolutely worthless as evidence. They show nothing but the liveliness of his imagination, the intensity of his feelings, and the smallness of his information. The passage quoted is about as credible as a story published in the Boston *Independent Chronicle*, in the summer of 1800, to the effect, that General Hamilton had been heard to say that "if Mr. Pinckney was not elected President, a revolution would be the consequence, and that, within the next four years, he should lose his head, or be the leader of a triumphant army." I do not say that what Hamilton says of Burr was certainly not true, but that it is not to be believed because Hamilton says it.

Other leading Federalists had no such horror of our dexter ous hero. Some despairing of their own candidates, even entertained the thought of giving him votes enough to elect him President over Jefferson. Senator Cabot, of Massachusetts, wrote to Hamilton upon this project, in the month of August

"The question has been asked," said Cabot, "whether, if the Federalists can not carry their first points, they would not do well to turn the election from Jefferson to Burr. They conceive Burr to be less likely to look to France for support, than Jefferson, provided he could be supported at home. They consider Burr as actuated by ordinary ambition, Jefferson by that and the pride of the Jacobinical philosophy. The former may be satisfied by power and property, the latter must see the roots of our society pulled up, and a new course of cultivation substituted; certainly it would have been fortunate for the United States if the second candidate on the Jacobin side had been one who might be safely trusted."

The venerable Carroll, of Carrollton, would have preferred Burr, as he supposed Burr would "act with more decision than Jefferson, and go better with his party." With either, however, the old gentleman thought the country on the road to ruin; Jacobinical chaos or Bonapartean usurpation was sure to overtake the doomed republic, sooner or later. Among the ultra Federalists this opinion was universal.

About the middle of December, the leaders of both parties knew how the election had gone. The result struck both sides with disappointment: Jefferson, 73; Burr, 73; Adams, 65; Pinckney, 64; Jay, 1.

Such was the doubtful issue of so many years of labor, of so much honorable effort, and so much not-very-honorable maneuvering. The tie, of course, threw the election into the House of Representatives. The politicians, instead of resting from their toils, were suddenly stimulated to such an activity of intrigue as never was known before. The country was wild with excitement. Aaron Burr soared at once into a position of national importance such as he had never before held.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE TIE INTRIGUES.

The Works of Washington, Jefferson, Adams and Hamilton — Letter from Burr to Wilkinson — Letter from Jefferson to Burr — Letter from Burr to Hon. S. Smith appointing him his Proxy — Letter from Hamilton to Secretary Wolcott denouncing Burr — The Federalists bent on electing Burr President — Letter from Otis to Hamilton asking Advice respecting the Project — Second Letter from Hamilton to Wolcott against Burr — Letter from Jefferson to Madison denouncing the Federal Intrigues — Honest Letter from Gouverneur Morris — Letter from Hamilton to Sedgwick, denouncing Burr — Letters from Hamilton to Morris and Bayard against Burr — Replies of Morris and Bayard to Hamilton — Letter from General Green to Hamilton — Letter of Governor Rutledge to Hamilton — Sedgwick's Reply to Hamilton — Long Letter of Hamilton to Bayard — Hamilton to Morris again — The Election in the House — Scene between Jefferson and Adams — Proof of Burr's Political Integrity — The Inauguration.

What occurred among the politicians from the middle of December, when the tie was first known, to the middle of February, when the House voted upon it, shall be, as far as possible, shown, not told. The publications of the last few years enable us to read the history of that time in the very words of its leading personages.

Among the volumes which "no gentleman's library is complete without," and which, in most gentlemen's libraries, slumber on the shelves with uncut leaves, are the forty ponderous octavoes, containing the works of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and Alexander Hamilton. That these volumes should be so utterly neglected as they are is not creditable to the national intelligence. In the Mercantile Library of the city of New York, which counts its subscribers by thousands, the condition in which these books were found by me, two or three years ago, was as follows: the first volume of each set showed marks of having been taken out and looked through, two or three times. The second volume had evidently been handled by some *one* adventurous person, and

about half of its leaves were cut. Beyond the second volume, no traces of the hand of man were discovered; a boundless continuity of virgin pages gave the reader a pleasing consciousness that he was the explorer of untrodden regions. Yet it is by the perusal of these works, aided by the memoirs of the time, that alone a knowledge of the country's history, during the period in which alone it had a history, can be obtained. Along with much that the modern reader may skip, with many essays upon government that once were vital and glowing, but can not now be read by any mortal, these works contain a mass of reading, instructive, interesting, and suggestive.

The letters and diaries are the best part of them. These are full of life and nature. Some of them are eloquent and impressive, the offspring of vigorous minds, wrought up to their highest strain by having to grapple with distractingly difficult circumstances. The letters correct one another. None of the writers, except Washington could make due allowance for one another's errors and foibles, and they often speak of political adversaries in terms of bitter depreciation. Hamilton is especially vituperative. He had the fine, declamatory talent which is often possessed by men of ardent feelings and limited understandings; and he used that talent in denouncing his opponents.

In this chapter, I propose to extract such passages of the letters written by leading politicians during the sixty days of the Tie excitement, which throw light upon the character and history of Aaron Burr, or upon the complicated events in which he now played a passive but conspicuous part, or upon the state of things in the country at this great crisis of the contention between the Old and the New. By thus bringing to a focus many scattered rays, the TRUTH, so long obscured, will, I trust, become visible to all but unwilling eyes. The extracts shall be arranged in the order of their dates. It may be as well to mention that, during the greater part of these sixty days, Hamilton was in New York, Jefferson at Washington, and Burr at Albany. Colonel Burr, it may be remembered, was a member of the State legislature. So far

from being "shrouded in mystery" at Albany, as two historians have it, he was there for the simple purpose of performing his duty in the Assembly, of which body he was always a busy member.

Another fact should he borne in mind. Up to this time, and for years after, Hamilton and Burr were, to all appearance, excellent friends. They consulted together on points of law. They met at the houses of common friends. Hamilton dined at Burr's table occasionally, and Burr at Hamilton's. The lovely Theodosia visited Mrs. Hamilton and her daughters. Many gentlemen who knew both Hamilton and Burr, and knew them, as they supposed, intimately, had no knowledge of Hamilton's embittered feelings against Burr. Burr himself had not. With all his acuteness and dexterity he was remarkably confiding; and though he was aware of Hamilton's intense partisan feelings, he did not, at this time, know the manner in which his rival was accustomed to write and speak of him. Far indeed was he from supposing Hamilton capable of using against him the careless words that fell from his lips at his own hospitable table! But to proceed.

October 10*th*, 1800. First I will copy entire a letter* written by Burr to General Wilkinson, after the democratic victory was known, but before the tie had been announced. It may serve as a specimen of his cautious manner of writing to confidential friends. It was written at Ballston, in the State of New York:

"That through Biddle, and the other of the 29th, came safe to me at Albany yesterday, P.M., just as I was mounting my horse to ride hither for my daughter, who has been passing a few days with a friend in this neighborhood, while I was attending on public duties at Albany. Having made electors, and a Senator, all democratic, the legislature adjourned, to meet on the last Tuesday in January, when I shall be again in Albany. To-morrow I move toward New York; and shall remain there for at least two months. From all this you will

* This letter is from the Appendix to the second volume of Wilkinson's 'Memoirs."

know how to address me; and as to the mode of conveyance, I take the mail to be the most secure. Our post-offices in New York and in Albany are *perfectly* safe. If yours in Washington, or where else you may be, should be safe, you may write fully. My curiosity as to S., is indeed gratified, even to satiety. I wish her well, and something more. I regret the book for the injury it will do (has done) to the reputation of one honest man, and the feelings of another. John's pride will be much wounded. In Jersey, I suspect, Adams will not have a vote. Among the electors I see some of his known political enemies, not Democrats, but high-going Feds. Virginia is pledged as far forth as faith and honor can bind men. You must be deceived as to S. C. When I receive your cypher and your address, you shall hear from me. Till then,

"Adieu. A. Burr."

"Noah Webster, the printer, has, I am told, published a letter against A. H. I have not seen it."

December 15th, 1800. — Jefferson, who had been for four or five years, a correspondent of Burr's, writes him to-day a congratulatory letter upon the happy result of the election. The exact result was not yet known; but there was no doubt the Republicans had triumphed. The tie was dimly foreshadowed. After some preliminary observations of no importance now, Mr. Jefferson proceeds thus:

"It was badly managed not to have arranged with certainty what seems to have been left to hazard. It was the more material, because I understand several high-flying Federalists have expressed their hope that the two Republican tickets may be equal, and their determination in that case to prevent a choice in the House of Representatives (which they are strong enough to do), and let the government devolve on a President of the Senate. Decency required that I should be so entirely passive during the late contest, that I never once asked whether arrangements had been made to prevent so many from dropping votes intentionally as might frustrate half the Republican wish; nor did I doubt, till lately, that such had been made.

"While I must congratulate you, my dear sir, on the issue of this contest, because it is more honorable, and, doubtless, more grateful to you than any station within the competence of the chief magistrate; yet, for myself, and for the substantial service of the public, I feel most sensibly the loss we sustain of your aid in our new administration. It leaves a chasm in my arrangements which can not be adequately filled up. I had endeavored to compose an administration whose talents, integrity, names, and dispositions should at once inspire unbounded confidence in the public mind, and insure a perfect harmony in the conduct of the public business. I lose you from the list, and am not sure of all the others. Should the gentlemen who possess the public confidence decline taking a part in their affairs, and force us to take persons unknown to the people, the evil genius of this country may realize his avowal that 'he will beat down the administration.' The return of Mr. Van Benthuysen, one of your electors, furnishes me a confidential opportunity of writing this much to you, which I should not have ventured through the post-office at this prying season. We shall, of course, see you before the 4th of March."

The "evil genius of this country," according to Mr. Jefferson, was Alexander Hamilton, and, doubtless, he was the individual referred to in this epistle. At a later and calmer day, Jefferson was juster to Hamilton.

December 16*th.* — One day after the above was written, and three or four days before it could have reached its destination, Colonel Burr wrote a letter to Mr. S. Smith, a member of the House of Representatives from Maryland, the materia part of which was the following:

"It is highly probable that I shall have an equal number of votes with Mr. Jefferson; but, if such should be the result, every man who knows me ought to know that I would utterly disclaim all competition. Be assured that the Federal party can entertain no wish for such an exchange. As to my friends, they would dishonor my views and insult my feelings by a suspicion that I would submit to be instrumental in counteracting

the wishes and the expectations of the United States. And I now constitute you my proxy to declare these sentiments if the occasion should require."

As this letter came, afterward, to be thought insincere, it is proper to mention that, *at the time*, it was highly applauded by the Republicans. At public dinners and other meetings, it was quoted as a proof of Burr's respect for the will of the people. He also received addresses and letters, applauding it.

December 16th. — Hamilton, too, writes a letter to-day. Wolcott, Secretary of the Treasury under Washington and Adams, and a 'high-flying Federalist,' was the individual addressed. This letter contains a passage relative to Burr and the tie, that breathes the very spirit of meanness. After stating, among other things, that Burr was "bankrupt beyond redemption, except by the plunder of his country," which was at least an exaggeration, he opposes the Federal project of supporting Burr, and adds the following despicable words:

"*Yet it may be well enough to throw out a lure for him, in order to tempt him to start for the plate, and then lay the foundation of disunion between the two chiefs.*"

December 17th. — But, among the Federalists, there had sprung up a perfect *furore* for electing Burr over Jefferson — so abhorrent to them was the prospect of seeing the arch-Democrat in the presidential chair. To-day, Mr. Otis, of Massachusetts, writes to Hamilton, the "father-confessor" of the Federal party, to ask his opinion how the Federalists could best improve the accident of the tie. "It is palpable," wrote Mr. Otis, "that to elect Burr would be to cover the opposition with chagrin, and to sow among them the seeds of a morbid division." Shall we, he continues, open negotiations with Burr? If yes, how? Will he stand to his engagements? We in Massachusetts do not know the man. You do. Advise us.

December 17th. — On the same day, Hamilton writes a second letter to Wolcott, rebuking vehemently the proposal to

elect Burr President by Federal votes. If the Federal party, he says, succeeds in electing Burr, "it will have done nothing more nor less than place in that station a man who will possess the boldness and daring necessary to give success to the Jacobin system, instead of one who, for want of that quality, will be less fitted to promote it.

"Let it not be imagined that Mr. Burr can be won to the Federal views. It is a vain hope. Stronger ties and stronger inducements than they can offer, will impel him in a different direction. His ambition will not be content with those objects which virtuous men of either party will allot to it, and his situation and his habits will oblige him to have recourse to corrupt expedients, from which he will be restrained by no moral scruple. To accomplish his end, he must lean upon unprincipled men, and will continue to adhere to the myrmidons who have hitherto surrounded him. To those he will, no doubt, add able rogues of the Federal party, but he will employ the rogues of all parties to overrule the good men of all parties, and to prosecute projects which wise men of every description will disapprove.

"These things are to be inferred, with moral certainty, from the character of the man. Every step in his career proves that he has formed himself upon the model of *Catiline*, and that he is too cold-blooded, and too determined a conspirator ever to change his plan.

"What would you think of these toasts and this conversation at his table within the last three or four weeks? 1st. The French Republic; 2d. The Commissioners on both sides who instigated the Convention (between France and the United States); 3d. Bonaparte; 4th. La Fayette.

"What would you think of his having seconded the positions that it was the interest of this country to allow the belligerent powers to bring in and sell their prizes, and build and equip ships in our ports? Can it be doubted that a man who has, all his life, speculated upon the popular prejudices, will consult them in the object of a war, when he thinks it is expedient to make one? Can a man who, despising democracy, has chimed in with all its absurdities, be diverted from the

plan of ambition which must have directed his course? They who suppose it must understand little of human nature. * * * Alas! when will men consult their reason rather than their passions? Whatever they may imagine, the desire of mortifying the adverse party must be the chief spring of the disposition to prefer Mr. Burr. * * * Adieu to the Federal Troy if they once introduce this Grecian horse into their citadel!"

Hamilton's horror of Burr's innocent and characteristic toasts (which, in another letter, he says he himself heard Burr give at Burr's own table), strikes the modern reader with surprise. The toasts were simply those of the ultra Democrats. They were strictly party toasts. Bonaparte had, indeed, usurped the government, but the French Republic still lived in name, and the American Republicans could toast the First Consul as "the armed soldier of democracy," and the great enemy of *their* great enemy, England. Burr, as a military man, could not but admire the greatest of soldiers. That Hamilton should have held up as monstrous such toasts as these, shows something of the humor and the caliber of the man, and of his party. It shows that, at that day, the ultra Federalists looked upon democratic opinions, as common-place clergymen regard heretical opinions, not merely as an erroneous way of thinking, but as a flagrant moral offense. A significance was then attached to toasts of which, in these unconvivial times, we can form little idea. Toasts were among the missive weapons of party warfare. By toasts, the sentiments of party were expressed, and the measures of party foreshadowed.

December 19th.—Jefferson writes to his friend Madison, announcing and deploring the tie; which, he says, "has produced great dismay and gloom on the Republican gentlemen here (Washington), and exultation in the Federalists, who openly declare they will prevent an election, and will name a President of the Senate *pro tem.* by what, they say, would only be a *stretch* of the Constitution."

December 19th.—To-day was written the only honest, and, therefore, the only sensible letter, which was written by a Federalist during the Tie controversy. The writer was Gouveneur Morris, a name ever to be held in respect from his having penned this epistle. The letter appears to have been written at Washington or Philadelphia. After mentioning the tie, and saying that there was a likelihood of the Federalists taking up Burr, but that some proposed preventing an election altogether, and putting the government upon a President of the Senate, Mr. Morris proceeded thus:

"Not meaning to enter into intrigues, I have merely expressed the opinion, that, SINCE IT WAS EVIDENTLY THE INTENTION OF OUR FELLOW-CITIZENS TO MAKE MR. JEFFERSON THEIR PRESIDENT, IT SEEMS PROPER TO FULFIL THAT INTENTION.

"The answer is simple, and, on mere reasoning, conclusive, but it is conclusive only to unimpassioned sentiment. Let the representatives do what they may, they will not want arguments to justify them, and the situation of our country (doomed perhaps to sustain, unsupported, a war against France or England) seems, indeed, to call for a vigorous, practical man. Mr. Burr will, it is said, come hither, and some who pretend to know his views think he will bargain with the Federalists. Of such a bargain I shall know nothing, and have declared my determination to support the constitutionally appointed administration, so long as its acts shall not, in my judgment, be essentially wrong. My personal line of conduct gives me no difficulty, but I am not without serious apprehension for the future state of things.

"The anti-Federal party is, beyond question, the most numerous at present, and should they be disappointed in their expectations as to the President, they will generally, I believe, oppose the government with embittered rancor. The best Federalists will, I apprehend, support but feebly a man whom (unjustly, perhaps) they consider as void of principle; and a government whose force lies in public opinion, will, under such circumstances, be critically situated."

In all Hamilton's correspondence on this subject, not one allusion can be found to the *only* right reason for preferring

Jefferson, which is so well stated by Gouveneur Morris in the above letter.

December 22d.—Hamilton writes to Theodore Sedgwick of Connecticut, formerly a friend and correspondent of Burr's To Sedgwick he says, that "the appointment of Burr as President will disgrace our country abroad. No agreement with him could be relied upon." And more to the same effect.

December 24th.—Hamilton replies to Morris, briefly repeating his denunciations of Burr.

December 26th.—A similar letter from Hamilton to Morris, in which he "trusts the Federalists will not be so mad as to vote for Burr." "If," he adds, "there be a man in the world I ought to hate, it is Jefferson. *With Burr I have always been personally well.* But the public good must be paramount to every private consideration."

December 27th.—To-day, Hamilton writes a long and very earnest letter to Mr. Bayard of Delaware, a member of the House, who carried the vote of his State in his pocket. He denounces his friend Burr, as "a voluptuary by system," and adds the following:

"No engagement that can be made with him can be depended upon; while making it, he will laugh in his sleeve at the credulity of those with whom he makes it; and the first moment it suits his views to break it, he will do so. Let me add, that I could scarcely name a discreet man of either party in our State who does not think Mr. Burr the most unfit man in the United States for the office of President. Disgrace abroad, ruin at home, are the probable fruits of his elevation. To contribute to the disappointment and mortification of Mr. Jefferson, would be, on my part, only to retaliate for unequivocal proofs of enmity; but in a case like this, it would be base to listen to personal considerations."

In this letter Hamilton repeats the toasts, before quoted, which he had heard from Burr's lips, when, as he now says

"I dined with him lately." He adds: "The peculiarity of the occasion will excuse my mentioning, in confidence, the occurrences of a private table."

January 5th, 1801. — Gouveneur Morris replies to Hamilton. In the course of his letter, he says: "Some, indeed most, of our eastern friends, are warm in support of Burr, and their pride is so much up about the charge of influence that it is dangerous to quote an opinion." He adds that the excitement among the politicians is fearful, and his own position of calm spectator difficult to support. "You who are temperate in drinking," he observes, "have never, perhaps, noticed the awkward situation of a man who continues sober after the company are drunk."

January 7th. — We are now getting into the interior circles. To-day Bayard, who held the power to decide the question by his single vote, replies to Hamilton at length, and with great apparent candor. He acknowledges Hamilton's letter, and thanks him for it; mentions Burr's letter to Mr. Smith, of Maryland, declining to frustrate the people's intention; and then proceeds thus:

"It (Burr's letter to Smith) is here (Washington) understood to have proceeded either from a false calculation as to the result of the electoral votes, or was intended as a cover to blind his own party. By persons friendly to Mr. Burr, it is distinctly stated that he is willing to consider the Federalists as his friends, and to accept the office of President as their gift. I take it for granted that Mr. Burr would not only gladly accept the office, but will neglect no means in his power to secure it." He then calculates his chances, and adds:

"I assure you, sir, there appears to be a strong inclination in a majority of the Federal party to support Mr. Burr. The current has already acquired considerable force, and manifestly increasing. The vote which the representation of a State enables me to give would decide the question in favor of Mr. Jefferson. At present I am by no means decided as to the

object of preference. If the Federal party should take up Mr. Burr, I ought certainly to be impressed with the most undoubting conviction before I separated myself from them. With respect to the personal quality of the competitors, I should fear as much from the sincerity of Mr. Jefferson (if he is sincere), as from the want of probity in Mr. Burr. There would be really cause to fear that the government would not survive the course of moral and political experiments to which it would be subjected in the hands of Mr. Jefferson. But there is another view of the subject which gives me inclination in favor of Burr. I consider the State ambition of Virginia as the source of present party. The faction who govern that State aim to govern the United States. Virginia will never be satisfied but when this state of things exists. If Burr should be the President, they will not govern, and his acceptance of the office, which would disappoint their views, which depend upon Jefferson, would, I apprehend, immediately create a schism in the party, which would soon rise into open opposition.

"I can not deny, however, that there are strong considerations which give a preference to Mr. Jefferson. The subject admits of many doubtful views, and before I resolve on the part I shall take, I shall wait the approach of the crisis, which may probably bring with it circumstances decisive of the event. The Federal party meets on Friday, for the purpose of forming a resolution as to their line of conduct. I have not the least doubt as to their agreeing to support Burr. Their determination will not bind me, for though it might cost me a painful struggle to disappoint the views and wishes of many gentlemen with whom I have been accustomed to act, yet the magnitude of the subject forbids the sacrifice of a strong conviction.

"I can not answer for the coherence of my letter, as I have undertaken to write to you from the Chamber of Representatives, with an attention divided by the debate which occupies the House.

"I have not considered myself at liberty to show your letter to any one, though I think it would be serviceable if you could trust my discretion in the communication of it."

January 9th. — General Gunn, a leading Federalist of Georgia, acknowledges to-day a letter from Hamilton on the engrossing topic, and adds some interesting statements. He writes from Washington:

"On the subject of choosing a President, some revolutionary opinions are gaining ground, and the Jacobins are determined to resist the election of Burr at every hazard — most of the Jacobin members will be instructed not to vote for Colonel Burr. I have seen a letter from Mr. Madison to one of the Virginia representatives, in which he says, that, in the event of the present House of Representatives not choosing Mr. Jefferson President, that the next House of Representatives will have a right to choose one of the two having the highest number of votes, and that the nature of the case, aided with the support of the great body of the people, will justify Jefferson and Burr *jointly* to call together the members of the next House of Representatives, previous to the 3d of December next, for the express purpose of choosing a President, and that he is confident *they* will make a *proper* choice." In other parts of his letter, he speaks of America being degraded by the *attempt* to elect Burr President. "What say you, my friend? the little Virginian must have been a little ferocious at the time he wrote to his friend. I am confident the present House will not elect Colonel Burr, and am persuaded the Democrats have taken their ground with a fixed resolution to destroy the government rather than yield their point. I fear some of our friends have committed themselves by writing improperly to Burr. We know the man and those who put themselves in his power will repent their folly."

January 10th. — Governor John Rutledge of South Carolina, replies to a letter from Hamilton, in a way to enhance posterity's contempt for the Federal party of 1800.

"My determination," he says, "to support Mr. Burr has been shaken by your communication, and I shall make, among those who with you are anxious to preserve public order at this crisis, all the use of it that its seasonableness and value

will enable me to do. Viewing Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Burr separately, each appears improper for the presidency; but looking on them together, and comparatively, the Federalists think their preferring Burr will be the least mischief they can do. His promotion will be prodigiously afflicting to the Virginia faction, and must disjoint the party. If Mr. B.'s presidency be productive of evils, it will be very easy for us to excite jealousy respecting his motives, and to get rid of him. Opposed by the Virginia party, it will be *his interest* to conciliate the Federalists; and we are assured by a gentleman who lately had some conversation with Mr. B. on this subject, that he is disposed to maintain and expand our systems. Should he attempt a usurpation, he will endeavor to accomplish his ends in a bold manner, and by the union of daring spirits — his project in such a shape can not be very formidable, and those employed in the execution of it can very easily be made way with. Should Mr. Jefferson be disposed to make (as he would term it) an improvement (and as we should deem it, a subversion) of our Constitution, the attempt would be fatal to us, for he would begin by democratizing the people, and end by throwing every thing into their hands."

January 10th. — Theodore Sedgwick replies to Hamilton's letter of December 22. The wrong-headedness of the Federal leaders is conspicuously shown in this epistle. Mr. Sedgwick begins by saying that all the Democrats are for Jefferson, and most of the Federalists for Burr. He then admits, that the people's intention was, that Jefferson should be President. But why did the people prefer Jefferson?

"Because," says Mr. Sedgwick, "he was known to be hostile to all those great systems of administration, the combined effect of which is our national prosperity, and all we possess of national character and respectability; because he is a sincere and enthusiastic Democrat in principle, plausible in manner, crafty in conduct, persevering in the pursuit of his object, regardless of the means by which it is attained, and equally regardless of an adherence to truth, as demonstrated by his

letter to Mazzei,* his declaration in the Senate, on his first taking his seat there, etc., etc.; because he is known to be devoted to the views of those men in his State, whose unceasing effort it has been, and is, to reduce in *practice* the administration of their government to the *principles* of the old confederation, in which that State, by her numerous representatives, and the influence which she has on surrounding States, will be the dictator; because he is known to be servilely devoted to one foreign nation, under any form of government, and pursuing any system of measures, however hostile to this country, and unrelentingly hostile to another nation; and those the two nations with which we have the most interesting relations, and with which it is most important to preserve an equal and impartial regard. Ought we, then, to respect the preference which is given to this man from such *motives*, and by such *friends?*

"As to the other candidate, there is no disagreement as to his character. He is ambitious, selfish, profligate. His ambition is

* Mazzei was a learned Italian, who had resided in Virginia, near Monticello, where he became intimate with Jefferson. Upon his return to Europe he wrote to Jefferson. Jefferson's reply, by some means, got into the newspapers, and made a prodigious clamor. Of this letter, dated April 24, 1795, the following is the part relating to public events:

"The aspect of our politics has wonderfully changed since you left us. In place of that noble love of liberty and republican government, which carried us triumphantly through the war, an Anglican monarchical aristocratical party has sprung up, whose avowed object is to draw over us the substance, as they have already done the forms, of the British government. The main body of our citizens, however, remain true to their republican principles; the whole landed interest is republican, and so is a great mass of talents. Against us are the Executive, the Judiciary, two out of three branches of the Legislature, all the officers of the government; all who want to be officers, all timid men, who prefer the calm of despotism to the boisterous sea of liberty. British merchants, and Americans trading on British capital, speculators and holders in the banks and public funds, a contrivance invented for the purpose of corruption, and for assimilating us in all things to the rotten as well as the sound part of the British model. It would give you a fever were I to name to you the apostates who have gone over to these heresies, men who were Samsons in the field and Solomons in the council, but who have had their heads shorn by the harlot England."

of the worst kind; it is a mere love of power, regardless of fame, but as its instrument; his *selfishness* excludes all social affection,* and his profligacy unrestrained by any moral sentiments, and defying all decency. This is agreed, but then it is known that his manners are plausible — that he is dexterous in the acquisition and use of the means necessary to effect his wishes. Nothing can be a stronger evidence of this than the situation in which he stands at this moment — without any pretension from connections, fame, or services — elevated by his own independent means to the highest point to which all those can carry the most meritorious man in the nation. He holds to no previous theories, but is a mere matter-of-fact man. His very selfishness prevents his entertaining any mischievous predilections for foreign nations. The situation in which he lives has enabled him to discern, and justly appreciate the benefits resulting from our commercial and other national systems, and this same selfishness will afford some security that he will not only patronize their support, but their invigoration.

"There are other considerations. It is very evident that the Jacobins dislike Mr. Burr as President — that they dread his appointment more than even that of General Pinckney.

"On his part, he hates them for the preference given to his rival. He has expressed his displeasure at the publication of his letter by General Smith. This jealousy, and distrust, and dislike, will every day more and more increase, and more and more widen the breach between them. If then Burr should be elected by the Federalists against the hearty opposition of the Jacobins, the wounds mutually given and received will probably be incurable. Each will have committed the unpardonable sin. Burr must depend on good men for his support, and that support he can not receive but by a conformity to their views.

"In these circumstances, then, to what evils shall we expose ourselves by the choice of Burr, which we should escape by the election of Jefferson? It is said that it would be more

* The reader will observe, that many of the leading Federalists, in denouncing Burr, use Hamilton's own phrases — so familiar had Hamilton made those phrases by repetition

disgraceful to our country, and to the principles of our gov ernment. For myself, I declare I think it impossible to preserve the honor of our country or the principles of our Constitution, by a mode of election which was intended to secure to prominent talents and virtues the first honors of our country, and for ever to disgrace the barbarous institutions by which executive power is to be *transmitted through the organs of generation.* We have at one election placed at the head of our government a semi-maniac (Adams), and who, in his soberest senses, is the greatest marplot in nature; and, at the next a feeble and false enthusiastic theorist (Jefferson) and a profligate (Burr) without character and without property, bankrupt in both. But if there remains any thing for us, in this respect, to regard, it is with the minority in the presidential election; and can they be more disgraced than by assenting to the election of Jefferson — the man who has proclaimed them to the world as debased in principle, and as detestable and traitorous in conduct? Burr is indeed unworthy, but the evidence of his unworthiness is neither so extensively known nor so conclusive as that of the other man.

"It must be confessed that there is part of the character of Burr more dangerous than that of Jefferson. Give to the former a probable chance, and he would become a usurper. The latter might not incline, he certainly would not dare, to make the attempt. I do not believe that either would succeed, and I am confident that such a project would be rejected by Burr as visionary.

"At first, I confess, I was strongly disposed to give Jefferson the preference; but the more I have reflected, the more I have inclined to the other; yet, however, I remain unpledged, even to my friends, though I believe I shall not separate from them."

January 10th. — A long letter from Hamilton to Gouveneur Morris about the ratification of the convention with France, concludes:

"So our eastern friends want to join the armed neutrality and make war upon Britain. I infer this from their mad pro-

pensity to make *Burr* President. If Jefferson has prejudices leading to that result, he has defects of character to keep him back. Burr, with the same propensities, will find the thing necessary to his projects, and will *dare* to hazard all consequences. They may as well think to bend a giant by a cobweb, as his ambition by promises."

January 15th. — Burr's own letters during this period are quite in his usual manner, light, jocular, and brief. An allusion to the tie occurs in a note to his son-in-law, Mr. Joseph Alston, of South Carolina. "The equality of Jefferson and Burr excites great speculation and much anxiety. I believe that all will be well, and that Jefferson will be our President." The subject is not mentioned in any other of his published letters.

January 16th. — The importance of Mr. Bayard, as a member of the House holding the entire vote of a State, induced Hamilton to try all his power to bring him over to his opinion. To Bayard, accordingly, he now writes the most carefully elaborated letter that the crisis elicited. It is the most complete expression of Hamilton's feelings as a patriot and as a partizan, that has come down to us.

"I was glad to find, my dear sir, by your letter," he began, "that you had not yet determined to go, with the consent of the Federal party, in support of Mr. Burr; and that you were resolved to hold yourself disengaged till the moment of final decision. Your resolution to separate yourself, in this instance, from the Federal party, if your conviction shall be strong of the unfitness of Mr. Burr, is certainly laudable. So much does it coincide with my ideas, that if the party shall, by supporting Mr. Burr as President, adopt him for their official chief, I shall be obliged to consider myself as an *isolated* man. It will be impossible for me to reconcile with my motives of *honor* or policy, the continuing to be of a party which, according to my apprehension, will have degraded itself and the country.

"I am sure, nevertheless, that the motives of many will be

good, and I shall never cease to esteem the individuals, though I shall deplore a step which I fear experience will show to be a very fatal one. Among the letters which I receive, assigning the reasons, *pro* and *con.*, for preferring Burr to Jefferson, I observe no small exaggeration to the prejudice of the latter, and some things taken for granted as to the former which are at least questionable. Perhaps myself the first, at some expense of popularity, to unfold the true character of Jefferson, it is too late for me to become his apologist. Nor have I any disposition to do it.

"I admit that his politics are tinctured with fanaticism; that he is too much in earnest in his democracy; that he has been a mischievous enemy to the principal measures of our past administration; that he is crafty and persevering in his objects; that he is not scrupulous about the means of success, nor very mindful of truth, and that he is a contemptible hypocrite. But it is not true, as is alleged, that he is an enemy to the power of the executive, or that he is for confounding all the powers in the House of Representatives. It is a fact, which I have frequently mentioned, that, while we were in the administration together, he was generally for a large construction of the executive authority, and not backward to act upon it in cases which coincided with his views. Let it be added that, in his theoretic ideas, he has considered as improper the participations of the Senate in the executive authority. I have more than once made the reflection that, viewing himself as the reversioner, he was solicitous to come into the possession of a good estate. Nor is it true, that Jefferson is zealous enough to do any thing in pursuance of his principles, which will contravene his popularity or his interest. He is as likely as any man I know to temporize; to calculate what will be likely to promote his own reputation and advantage, and the probable result of such a temper is the preservation of systems, though originally opposed, which being once established, could not be overturned without danger to the person who did it. To my mind, a true estimate of Mr. Jefferson's character warrants the expectation of a temporizing, rather than a violent system. That Jefferson has manifested a culpable predilection

for France is certainly true; but I think it a question whether it did not proceed quite as much from her *popularity* among us as from sentiment; and in proportion as that popularity is diminished, his zeal will cool. Add to this that there is no fair reason to suppose him capable of being corrupted, which is a security that he will not go beyond certain limits. It is not at all improbable that, under the change of circumstances, Jefferson's Gallicism has considerably abated.

"As to Burr, these things are admitted, and indeed can not be denied, that he is a man of *extreme* and *irregular* ambition; that he is *selfish* to a degree which excludes all social affections; and that he is decidedly *profligate*. But it is said, 1st, that he is *artful* and *dexterous* to accomplish his ends; 2d, that he holds no pernicious theories, but is a mere *matter-of fact* man; 3d, that his very selfishness is a guard against mischievous foreign predilection; 4th, that his *local situation* has enabled him to appreciate the utility of our commercial and fiscal systems, and the same qualities of selfishness will lead him to support and invigorate them; 5th, that he is now disliked by the Jacobins; that his elevation will be a mortal stab to them, breed an invincible hatred to him, and compel him to lean on the Federalists; 6th, Burr's ambition will be checked by his good sense, by the manifest impossibility of succeeding in any scheme of usurpation, and that, if attempted, there is nothing to fear from the attempt.

"These topics are, in my judgment, more plausible than solid. As to the first point, the fact must be admitted; but those qualities are objections rather than recommendations, when they are under the direction of bad principles. As to the second point, too much is taken for granted. If Burr's conversation is to be credited, he is not very far from being a visionary. He has quoted to me *Connecticut** as an example of the success of the democratic theory, and as authority, serious doubts whether it was not a good one. It is ascertained that in some instances he has talked perfect *Godwinism.* I have myself heard him speak with applause of the French

* The colonial government of Connecticut was more democratic than that of the other colonies.

system, as unshackling the mind, and leaving it to its natural energies; and I have been present when he has contended against banking systems with earnestness, and with the same arguments that Jefferson would use. (Note by Hamilton. "Yet he has lately, by a trick, established a *bank*, a perfect monster in its principles, but a very convenient instrument of *profit and influence*.")

"The truth is, that Burr is a man of a very subtle imagination, and a mind of this make is rarely free from ingenious whimsies. Yet I admit that he has no fixed theory, and that his peculiar notions will easily give way to his interest. But is it a recommendation to have *no theory?* Can that man be a systematic or able statesman who has none? I believe not. *No general principles* will hardly work much better than erroneous ones.

"As to the third point, it is certain that Burr, generally speaking, has been as warm a partizan of France as Jefferson; that he has, in some instances, shown himself to be so with passion. But if it was from calculation, who will say that his calculations will not continue him so? His selfishness, so far from being an obstacle, may be a prompter. If corrupt, as well as selfish, he may be a partisan for the sake of aid to his views. No man has trafficked more than he in the floating passions of the multitude. Hatred to Great Britain and attachment to France in the public mind will naturally lead a man of his selfishness, attached to place and power, to favor France and oppose Great Britain. The Gallicism of many of our patriots is to be thus resolved, and, in my opinion, it is morally certain that Burr will continue to be influenced by this calculation.

"As to the fourth point, the instance I have cited with respect to banks, proves that the argument is not to be relied upon. If there was much in it, why does Chancellor Livingston maintain that we ought not to cultivate navigation, but ought to let foreigners be our carriers? France is of this opinion too; and Burr, for some reason or other, will be very apt to be of the opinion of France.

"As to the fifth point, nothing can be more fallacious. It

is demonstrated by recent facts that Burr is *solicitous* to keep upon *anti-Federal* ground to avoid compromitting himself by any engagement with the Federalists. With or without such engagement, he will easily persuade his former friends that he does not stand on that ground; and after their first resentment, they will be glad to rally under him. In the mean time, he will take care not to disoblige them; and he will always court those among them who are best fitted for tools. He will never choose to lean on good men, because he knows that they will never support his bad projects; but, instead of this, he will endeavor to disorganize both parties, and to form out of them a third, composed of men fitted by their characters to be conspirators and instruments of such projects.

"That this will be his future conduct, may be inferred from his past plan, and from the admitted quality of irregular ambition. Let it be remembered that Mr. Burr has never appeared solicitous for fame, and that great ambition, unchecked by principle, or the love of glory, is an unruly tyrant, which never can keep long in a course which good men will approve. As to the last point, the proposition is against the experience of all times. Ambition, without principle, was never long under the guidance of good sense. Besides that, really, the force of Mr. Burr's understanding is much overrated. He is far more *cunning* than wise, far more *dexterous* than *able*.

["*Very, very confidential.* — In my opinion he is inferior in real ability to Jefferson. There are also facts against the supposition. It is past all doubt that he has blamed me for not having improved the situation I once was in to change the government. That when answered that this could not have been done without guilt, he replied, *Les grands âmes se soucient peu des petits moraux;** that when told the thing was never practicable, from the genius and situation of the country, he answered, 'That depends upon the estimate we form of the human passions, and of the means of influencing them.' Does this prove that Mr. Burr would consider a scheme of usurpation as visionary?]

"The truth is, with great apparent coldness he is the most

* Great souls care little for the minor morals.

sanguine man in the world. He thinks every thing possible to adventure and perseverance; and though I believe he will fail, I think it almost certain he will attempt usurpation, and the attempt will involve great mischief.

"But there is one point of view which seems to me decisive. If the anti-Federalists, who prevailed in the election, are left to take their own man, they remain responsible, and the Federalists remain *free*, *united*, and without *stain*, in a situation to resist with effect pernicious measures. If the Federalists substitute Burr, they adopt him, and become answerable for him. Whatever may be the theory of the case, abroad and at *home* (for so from the beginning it will be taught), Mr. Burr must become, *in fact*, the man of our party; and if he acts ill, we must share in the blame and disgrace. By adopting him, we do all we can to reconcile the minds of Federalists to him, and we prepare them for the effectual operation of his acts. He will, doubtless, gain many of them; and the Federalists will become a disorganized and contemptible party. Can there be any serious question between the policy of leaving the anti-Federalists to be answerable for the elevation of an objectionable man, and that of adopting ourselves, and becoming answerable for a man who, on all hands, is acknowledged to be a complete Catiline? 'Tis enough to state the question to indicate the answer, if reason, not passion, presides in the decision.

"You may communicate this and my former letter to discreet and confidential friends."

Upon this letter a remark or two may be permitted. A man who, after knowing Jefferson as intimately as Hamilton had, could deliberately pronounce him "a contemptible hypocrite," was no judge of men; and nothing, therefore, which he says of an opponent has any value. Jefferson still lives in the history of his administration — lives in the stamp he left upon his country's intellect — lives in the nine volumes of his letters. Read all these, and learn whether Thomas Jefferson was or was not a contemptible hypocrite, or in any sense contemptible. The horror which Hamilton expresses of Godwin, that gentle-hearted enthusiast, that passionate lover of justice and

of man, that friend of the most loveable gentleman of his day, Charles Lamb, is ineffably absurd. If Burr really said that great souls do not much regard the minor moralities, he uttered as deadly a falsehood as ever fell from lips. Great souls, indeed, know no *minor* morals; to them all morals are great, august, controlling. They know no degrees in right and wrong. Hamilton, in his letter to Governor Jay, advising the defeat of the Republicans by a governmental trick, utters sentiments not unlike that which he here attributes to Burr. But no man who knows men will judge of what a man will *do* by what, in unguarded moments, he says.*

With regard to Hamilton's chronic dread of Burr's usurping the government, it was only one of the symptoms of the *Burriphobia* under which he labored. Scheming for a *reëlection* is enough to keep an ambitious man amused in the presidential chair. Two things, however, strengthened Hamilton's fear of usurpation. One was the recent example of Bonaparte; the other, the very general opinion among the wealthier classes in the United States, that the Constitution had been tried and found wanting. Hamilton was of that opinion. Of the two, Hamilton was more likely to have made an attempt to subvert the government than Burr; for Hamilton was already convinced of the necessity of its subversion. If Burr had formed any thing like a *purpose*, however vague, however remote its probable execution, to seize the supreme authority, he would not have begun by awakening the suspicions of the man who would certainly be the first to lead an outraged people against the usurper.

January (No date named, but probably about the 20th). Hamilton writes, in hot haste, to Gouverneur Morris, at

* Jefferson's *integrity*, as a man, has never been disputed, I believe. But in one of his letters to Dr. Rush, dated January 3, 1808, the following passage occurs: "Thus I estimate the qualities of the mind: 1st. Good Humor, 2d. Integrity, 3d. Industry, 4th. Science. The preference of the first to the second quality may not at first be acquiesced in; but, certainly, we had all rather associate with a good-humored, light-principled man, than with an ill-tempered rigorist in morality."

Washington, to communicate some information for use against Burr.

"I hasten," he says, "to give you some information which may be useful. I know, as a fact, that overtures have been made by leading individuals of the Federal party to Mr. Burr, who declines to give any assurance respecting his future intentions and conduct, saying that to do it might injure him with his friends, and hinder their coöperation; that all ought to be inferred from the necessity of his future situation, as it regarded the disappointment and animosity of the anti-Federalists; that the Federalists, relying upon this, might proceed in the certainty that, upon a second ballot, New York and Tennessee would join him. It is likewise ascertained that he perfectly understands himself with Edward Livingston, who will be his *agent* at the seat of government.

"Thus you see that Mr. Burr is resolved to preserve himself in a situation to adhere to his former friends, engagements, and projects, and to use the Federalists as tools of his aggrandizement.

"He will satisfy them that he has kept himself free to continue his relations with them, and as many of them are secretly attached to him, they will all be speedily induced to rally under his standard, to which he will add the unprincipled of our party, and he will laugh at the rest.

"It is a fact that Mr. Burr is now in frequent and close conference with a Frenchman, who is suspected of being an agent of the French government, and it is not to be doubted that he will be the firm ally of Buonaparte.

"You are at liberty to show this letter to such friends as you think fit, especially Mr. Bayard, of Delaware, in whose principles and sound sense I have much confidence.

"Depend upon it, men never played a more foolish game than will do the Federalists, if they support Burr."

From this letter we learn, that Hamilton's *information* respecting an opponent must be received with the same caution as his *opinion*. Edward Livingston was no agent of Burr's. He was, at this time, as will soon appear, true to himself and to his party, and one of Jefferson's most confidential friends.

January 21st. — A hurried letter from Hamilton to Sedgwick. Refers him to his long letter to Bayard. Begs him to reconsider his preference for Burr. Adds: "I never was so much mistaken as I shall be if our friends, in the event of their success, do not rue the preference they will give to that Catiline."

Hamilton's warnings were little heeded by the Federalists. His denunciations of Colonel Burr were attributed to professional jealousy, or personal enmity, and the Federal members burned with desire to disappoint the Republicans by electing Burr.

The day for the election in the House of Representatives arrived. The House consisted of one hundred and six members, of whom a majority were Federalists. There were then sixteen States in the Union; a *majority of the States* was necessary to an election; and the House was limited in its choice to the two candidates who had received the highest number of electoral votes. If a simple majority of the *members* would have sufficed, Burr would certainly have been elected on the first ballot. Before proceeding to the great business of the day, the House resolved not to adjourn till a President had been chosen — which, John Randolph says, was a Federal expedient designed to starve or worry the undecided members into voting for Burr. During the balloting, the public were excluded from the galleries, but, on the floor of the House, seats were provided for the Senators and the President. It chanced that some of the members were sick at the time — for them sofas were provided. One gentleman, who was seriously ill, was attended in the House by his wife.

On the first ballot eight States voted for Jefferson, namely, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, North Carolina, Virginia, Kentucky, Georgia, and Tennessee. Six States voted for Burr, namely, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Delaware, and South Carolina. Vermont and Maryland were divided equally between the two candidates. Neither on this ballot, nor on any future one, did Jefferson receive more than fifty-one votes. The balloting con-

tinued, at intervals, all that day, all through the night, and until noon of the day following. The vote was taken twenty-nine times without the slightest change or prospect of change. Then the exhausted members evaded their resolution not to adjourn, by agreeing to take a recess. Dogged obstinacy sat on every countenance.

For seven days the country was kept in suspense, and Rumor, with all her tongues, was busy. During this period, and immediately after it, certain letters were written, and entries made in private journals, the perusal of which will complete the reader's knowledge of the Tie, and the Tie intrigues.

February 10th. — On the first day of the balloting, Judge Cooper of New York (father of J. Fennimore Cooper), a remarkably 'highflying Federalist,' and, at that time, a member of the House, wrote as follows to his friend Thomas Morris:

"We have this day locked ourselves up by a rule to proceed to choose a President before we adjourn. * * * We shall run Burr perseveringly. You shall hear of the result instantly after the fact is ascertained. *A little good management would have secured our object on the first vote*, but now it is too late for any operation to be gone into, except that of adhering to Burr, and leave the consequences to those who have heretofore been his friends. If we succeed, a faithful support must, on our part, be given to his administration, which, I hope, will be wise and energetic."

Two days after, Judge Cooper writes again to Mr. Morris: "We have postponed, until to-morrow 11 o'clock, the voting for President. All stand firm. Jefferson eight—Burr six—divided two. *Had Burr done any thing for himself, he would long ere this have been President.* If a majority would answer, he would have it on every vote."

February 10th. — This was the second day of the balloting. Jefferson, who was then in his place as President of the Senate, enters in his diary the following gossip:

"Edward Livingston tells me that Bayard applied to-day or last night, to General Samuel Smith, and represented to

him the expediency of his coming over to the States who vote for Burr, that there was nothing in the way of appointment which he might not command, and particularly mentioned the secretaryship of the navy. Smith asked him if he was authorized to make the offer. He said he was authorized. Smith told this to Livingston, and to W. C. Nichols, who confirms it to me. Bayard in like manner tempted Livingston, not by offering any particular office, but by representing to him his, Livingston's, intimacy and connection with Burr; that from him he had every thing to expect, if he would come over to him. To Dr. Linn of New Jersey, they have offered the government of New Jersey."

The part which Bayard took in the business will be narrated by himself in a moment. Upon the publication of the volume of Mr. Jefferson's work which contains the above, General Smith, then a Senator from Maryland, declared in the Senate that no such proposition was made to him by Mr. Bayard.

February 14*th*, Jefferson records the following: "General Armstrong tells me that Gouveneur Morris, in conversation with him to-day on the scene which is passing, expressed himself thus. 'How comes it,' says he, 'that Burr, who is four hundred miles off (at Albany) has agents here at work with great activity, while Mr. Jefferson, who is on the spot, does nothing?'"

A year or two after the "scene" was over, it became the subject of conversation, one day, at Jefferson's table. After dinner, Jefferson wrote in his diary as follows: "Matthew Lyon noticed the insinuations against the Republicans of Washington, pending the presidential election, and expressed his wish that every thing was spoken out which was known; that it would then appear on which side there was a bidding for votes, and he declared that John Brown of Rhode Island, urging him to vote for Colonel Burr, used these words, 'What is it you want, Colonel Lyon? Is it office, is it money? Only say what you want, and you shall have it.'"

Who can believe a man to whom such a proposition could have been even remotely hinted? Jefferson shows himself weak in recording stuff of this kind.

That *every thing* against Burr may appear, I copy the following from Jefferson's diary of a still later date, January, 1804: "Colonel Hitchburn of Massachusetts reminded me of a letter he had written me from Philadelphia, pending the presidential election, says he did not therein give the details. That he was in company at Philadelphia with Colonel Burr and ———: that in the course of the conversation on the election, Colonel Burr said, 'We must have a President, and a constitutional one, in some way.' 'How is it to be done?' says Hitchburn; 'Mr. Jefferson's friends will not quit him, and his enemies are not strong enough to carry another.' 'Why,' says Burr, 'our friends must join the Federalists, and give the President.' The next morning at breakfast, Colonel Burr repeated nearly the same, saying, 'We can not be without a President, our friends must join the Federal vote.' 'But,' says Hitchburn, 'we shall then be without a Vice-President, who is to be our Vice-President?' Colonel Burr answered, 'Mr. Jefferson.'"

This sounds like the toadying tale of an office-seeker.

February 15th. — Mr. Jefferson writes to his friend Monroe: "If the Federalists could have been permitted to pass a law for putting the government into the hands of an officer, they would certainly have prevented an election. But we thought it best to declare, one and all, openly and firmly, that the day such an act passed, the middle States would arm; and that no such usurpation, even for a single day, should be submitted to. This first shook them; and they were completely alarmed at the resource for which we declared, namely, to reorganize the government, and to amend it. The very word *convention* gives them the horrors, as in the present democratical spirit of America they fear they should lose some of the favorite morsels of the Constitution."

One of Mr. Jefferson's letters to Dr. Rush records a scene that occurred, during this terrible week, between himself and President Adams:

"When the election between Burr and myself," wrote Jefferson, "was kept in suspense by the Federalists, and they

were meditating to place the President of the Senate at the head of the government, I called on Mr. Adams, with a view to have this desperate measure prevented by his negative. He grew warm in an instant, and said, with a vehemence he had not used toward me before,

"'Sir, the event of the election is in your own power. You have only to say you will do justice to the public creditors, maintain the navy, and not disturb those holding offices, and the government will instantly be put into your hands. We know it is the wish of the people it should be so.'

"'Mr. Adams,' said I, 'I know not what part of my conduct, in either public or private life, can have authorized a doubt of my fidelity to the public engagements. I say, however, I will not come into the government by capitulation — I will not enter on it but in perfect freedom to follow the dictates of my own judgment.'

"I had before given the same answer to the same intimation from Gouveneur Morris.

"'Then,' said he, 'things must take their course.'

"I turned the conversation to something else, and soon took my leave. It was the first time in our lives we had ever parted with any thing like dissatisfaction."

February 22d. — The great question had been decided, but Hamilton had not heard the news. He writes to-day, a last letter to a friend at Washington, mentioning a fact which, he hoped, would utterly defeat the election of Burr. As one of the hundred proofs of Burr's consistency and integrity, as a politician, it deserves attention. Hamilton says:

"After my ill success hitherto, I ought perhaps, in prudence, to say nothing further on the subject. But situated as things now are, I certainly have no advice to give. Yet I may, without impropriety, communicate a fact — it is this:

"Colonel Burr is taking an active *personal part* in favor of Mr. Clinton, against Mr. Van Rensselaer, as Governor of this State. I have, *upon my honor*, direct and indubitable evidence, that between two and three weeks past, he wrote a very urgent letter to *Oliver Phelps*, of the western part of

this State, to induce his exertions in favor of Clinton. Is not this an unequivocal confirmation of what I predicted, that he will, in any event, continue to play the Jacobin game? Can any thing else explain his conduct at such a moment, and under such circumstances? I might add several other things to prove that he is resolved to adhere to, and cultivate his own party, who lately, more than ever, have shown the cloven foot of *rank Jacobinism*."

To what a ridiculous pitch Hamilton's feelings were wrought during the struggle, is shown by his subsequent avowal to Mr. Bayard: "It is believed to be an alarming fact, that while the question of the presidential election was pending in the House of Representatives, parties were organizing in several of the cities, in the event of their being no election, *to cut off the leading Federalists and seize the government!*"

March 8th. — After seven days of occasional dogged balloting, the excitement in the country ever on the increase, and threatening to become serious, the struggle was terminated by Mr. Bayard. The manner in which he did this he related at the time in a letter to Hamilton, which letter is an important link in Burr's vindication.

"Your views," wrote Mr. Bayard, on the 8th of March, "in relation to the election differed very little from my own, but I was obliged to yield to a torrent, which I perceived might be diverted, but could not be opposed.

"In one case I was willing to take Burr, but I never considered it as a case likely to happen. If by his conduct he had completely forfeited the confidence and friendship of his party, and left himself no resort but the support of the Federalists, there are many considerations which would have induced me to prefer him to Jefferson. But I was enabled soon to discover that he was determined not to shackle himself with Federal principles; and it became evident that if he got in without being absolutely committed to his own party, that he would be disposed and obliged to play the game of M'Kean upon an improved plan and enlarged scale.

"In the origin of the business, I had contrived to lay hold

of all the doubtful votes in the House, which enabled me, according to views which presented themselves, to protract or terminate the controversy.

"This arrangement was easily made from the opinion readily adopted from the consideration that, representing a small State without resources which could supply the means of self-protection, I should not dare to proceed to any lengths which would jeopardize the Constitution, or the safety of my State. When the experiment was fully made, and acknowledged upon all hands to have completely ascertained that Burr was resolved not to commit himself, and that nothing remained but to appoint a President by law, or leave the government without one, I came out with the most explicit and determined declaration of voting for Jefferson. You can not well imagine the clamor and vehement invective to which I was subjected for some days. We had several caucuses. All acknowledged that nothing but desperate measures remained, which several were disposed to adopt, and but few were willing openly to disapprove. We broke up each time in confusion and discord, and the manner of the last ballot was arranged but a few minutes before the ballot was given. Our former harmony, however, has since been restored.

"The public declarations of my intention to vote for Jefferson, to which I have alluded, were made without a general consultation, knowing that it would be an easier task to close the breach which I foresaw, when it was the result of an act done without concurrence, than if it had proceeded from one against a decision of the party. Had it not been for a single gentleman from Connecticut, the eastern States would finally have voted in blank, in the same manner as done by South Carolina and Delaware; but because he refused, the rest of the delegation refused; and because Connecticut insisted on continuing the ballot for Burr, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island refused to depart from their former vote.

"*The means existed of electing Burr, but this required his coöperation. By deceiving one man (a great blockhead), and tempting two (not incorruptible), he might have secured*

a majority of the States. He will never have another chance of being President of the United States; and the little use he has made of the one which has occurred, gives me but an humble opinion of the talents of an unprincipled man."

Thus ended the great struggle, during which the Constitution was subjected to the severest strain it has ever known, and bore it without one moment's real danger of giving way. Its history has been here given in the language of Colonel Burr's bitter enemies. The impression which that history so related will leave on the mind of the reader, can not be foreseen. It was the diligent reading of Burr's political history in the letters, pamphlets, and newspapers of his enemies and opponents, which convinced *me* that, as a partizan, he acted throughout with the strictest honor and consistency!

The 4th of March, 1801, was a day of rejoicing throughout the United States. After a period of painful anxiety, the country breathed again. Processions, orations, and banquets testified, in the larger cities and towns, to the public joy. The inauguration was happily achieved at the usual hour. In the evening, President Jefferson and Vice-President Burr received the congratulations of gentlemen of both parties at the presidential mansion, where all but a few of the most bigoted Federal Senators and Representatives were to be seen in the throng that gathered round the victorious chiefs. The inauguration speech had lulled the apprehensions of the Federalists, and the new order of things was accepted with a good grace.

Far away, at Albany, the Republicans of the New York legislature were banqueting hilariously. In reporting the proceedings of this occasion, the Albany *Register* informed the world that the company "did not forget the important success of the Republicans in the choice of that firm and tried patriot, Aaron Burr, as Vice-President of the United States." Next to the toast given in honor of the President, the following was offered:

"Aaron Burr, Vice-President of the United States; his uni

form and patriotic exertions in favor of Republicanism eclipsed only by his late disinterested conduct."

Not a whisper of dissension was heard. De Witt Clinton, who had held aloof from the great campaign of 1800, was present at the banquet, and offered this toast:

"Our Republican brethren of the South — may we always be united with them in the elevation of patriots, and the promotion of good principles."

Fiery John Adams could not submit with decent dignity to his fate. "The last day," says Jefferson, "of his political power, the last hour, and even beyond midnight, were employed in filling all offices, and especially permanent ones, with the bitterest Federalists, and providing for me the alternative, either to execute the government by my enemies, whose study it would be to thwart and defeat all my measures, or to incur the odium of such numerous removals from office as might bear me down." By daybreak on the morning of the inauguration the ex-President had left the seat of government for ever.*

The Federal party tasted the sweets of power no more. The leaders continued, and continue, to forebode the country's ruin, while they enjoy the lion's share of its prosperity.

Hamilton bought a few acres of land near the city, and relieved the monotony of law by improving his grounds. When next he wrote to General Pinckney, he begins his letter by requesting his friend to send him some Carolina melon-seed

* John Adams went to his grave without understanding the nature of the revolution which ousted him. In 1811 he wrote to Dr. Rush: "In point of Republicanism, all the difference I ever knew or could discover between you and me, or between Jefferson and me, consisted,

"1. In the difference between speeches and messages. I was a monarchist because I thought a speech more manly, more respectful to Congress and the nation. Jefferson and Rush preferred messages.

"2. I held levees once a week, that all my time might not be wasted by idle visits. Jefferson's whole eight years was a levee.

"3. I dined a large company once or twice a week. Jefferson dined a dozen every day.

"4. Jefferson and Rush were for liberty and straight hair. I thought curled hair was as Republican as straight."

for his new garden, and some Carolina parroquets for his daughter. "A garden, you know, is a very usual refuge for a disappointed politician," said he. His letters, indeed, were still full of politics, but they were often couched in the language of despair. "Mine is an odd destiny," he wrote to Gouveneur Morris. "Perhaps no man in the United States has sacrificed or done more for the present Constitution than myself; and, contrary to all my anticipations of its fate, as you know, from the very beginning. I am still laboring to prop the frail and worthless fabric. Yet I have the murmurs of its friends, no less than the curses of its foes, for my reward. What can I do better than withdraw from the scene? Every day proves to me, more and more, that this American world was not made for me."

The country was at peace. The strife of parties, for the moment, ceased. The real wish of the people was so completely satisfied by the election of Jefferson, that, for twenty-four years he and his friends kept possession of the government without serious opposition. Jefferson inherited the errors of Adams and the able devices of Hamilton; by abandoning the former, and retaining the latter, and, above all, by paying homage to the republican idea in the minor arrangements of his house and administration, he won a vast and immovable popularity.

Minor arrangements, do I call them? Of all the facts that contributed to the popularity which America enjoyed in Europe, down to the beginning of the present contention between Democracy and Slavery, a popularity which *peopled* the free States, no tale was so captivating to the European imagination, sick of tawdry relics of barbarous ages, sick of courts and their stupid usages, as this: *In America any man may go and see the President, and shake hands with him.* Cheap land was not the attraction. Land was cheap in Australia, in Canada, in Brazil, in Virginia. It was that little fact, and what it implied, which freighted our homeward-bound ships with wealth in its most condensed and productive form, namely, honest, stalwart human beings!

CHAPTER XVII.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT.

THE OFFICE OF VICE-PRESIDENT — MARRIAGE OF THEODOSIA — HER SON — BURR'S DELIGHT IN HIM — HIS STYLE OF LIVING — HIS COURTSHIP OF CELESTE — HIS POPULARITY AND GENERAL GOOD FORTUNE.

WE behold our hero now upon the summit of his career. At the age of forty-five, ten years after becoming known in national politics, he stands one step below the highest place to which by politics a man can rise.

The office of Vice-President of the United States, besides the *chance* which gives it importance, has, in any case, an odor of nationality about it which gives it dignity. Impetuous John Adams called it an insignificant office. But that was when the old war-horse heard the noise of battle in the House of Representatives, or saw it waging before him in the Senate, and longed, as of old, to plunge into the thickest of the fight. Adams really enjoyed the safe honors of the place as well as any man. At that day, something of the old sanctity still clung to high office, and it was more to be Vice-President than it is now. Burr, too, stood in the line of succession. Adams rose from the second office to the first, and Jefferson had just done the same. That Aaron Burr should in like manner be advanced, was what precedent indicated, what his partisans counted on, and what the people naturally looked for. Meanwhile, he wore his honors with the airy dignity which belonged to the man. It is apparent in his merry, sprightly correspondence, that he took pleasure in filling a place that called into conspicuous exercise the very qualities in which he excelled all the public men of his time.

He was happy in his domestic circumstances. His two step-sons, to whom he had ever shown more than a father's

liberality, had prospered well in life. One of them was now Judge Prevost, Recorder of the city of New York; the other, a country gentleman of competent estate in Westchester county. A young lady of French extraction, whom he had, in effect, adopted, and who had grown up and been educated with Theodosia, and whom he loved only less than his own child, was married, about this time, to a young man of a distinguished southern family.

And Theodosia was married. While the politicians supposed that Colonel Burr was full of the alleged tie negotiation, and some of them imagined that he was intriguing with all his might for the presidency, he was, in reality, occupied with the marriage of his daughter with Joseph Alston of South Carolina, which occurred while the great question was pending. This, with his duties in the legislature, absorbed his thoughts and time. It was a marriage in every respect fortunate and suitable. Mr. Alston was twenty-two years of age, a gentleman in all the senses of the word, and possessed of considerable property in rice plantations. He was also a man of talent, as is evident from his subsequent career, and from the elegance, ingenuity, and force of his letters to Theodosia. When first he became her accepted suitor, he was merely the young man of fortune, without any definite object in life. He had been admitted to the bar, it is true, but had never had nor sought professional employment. Colonel Burr fired him with his own ambition, stimulated his powers, urged and directed his studies, advised his occasional appearance in the courts, and induced him to enter the political arena. Mr. Alston soon made himself prominent in the politics of his native State, of which, in due time, he became governor. "Burr was a princely father-in-law," says a gentleman still living, who was intimate with both families.

I can well believe it. "You know," he wrote to Theodosia, after she had gone to her southern home, "that you and your concerns are the highest, the dearest interest I have in this world, one in comparison with which all others are insignificant." Father and daughter were on delightful terms with one another: he playful, tender, considerate, wise, confiding

every thing to her; she amusing him with her graceful wit, cheering him with her affection, reposing in him an absolute trust. He still directed her studies. Indeed, the burden of his advice to her always was: Never cease to improve your mind; better lose your head than your habits of study. "The longer I live," she writes to him, "the more frequently the truth of your advice evinces itself, that occupation is necessary to give us command over ourselves." That is an eminently Burr-ian maxim.

Her removal to a State which was then twenty days' journey from New York, was a drawback to his happiness in her marriage. But, during these happy years, Theodosia's visits to the home of her childhood were frequent and long. And who so much caressed as the beautiful young matron from South Carolina, the daughter of the Vice-President? She led the society of two States; and was worthy to lead it. It is not difficult to discover that she preferred her northern home. She declared that the society of New York was so superior to that of the South, that a *woman* must be a fool who denied it. Even our scenery was incomparably finer, she thought. One who only knows the outskirts of New York, as they now appear, tunneled, excavated, shantied, and every way disfigured by the advance-guard of the marching metropolis, can not recognize Theodosia's description of the scene as it was in 1802. After returning to her father's town-house one day, from a visit to Richmond Hill, which excursion she called "a ride into the country," she wrote to her husband thus: "Never did I behold this island so beautiful. The variety of vivid greens; the finely-cultivated fields and gaudy gardens; the neat, cool air of the cits' boxes, peeping through straight rows of tall poplars, and the elegance of some gentlemen's seats, commanding a view of the majestic Hudson, and the high, dark shores of New Jersey, altogether form a scene so lively, so touching, and to me now so new, that I was in constant rapture."

In due time her boy, her only child, was born, whom she named after her father. Henceforth this boy, next to Theodosia, was the dearest object on earth to Aaron Burr. Surely,

never was grandchild so loved as this grandchild was by him. He was never weary of its company. He could never hear enough of its ways and words. Theodosia filled whole letters with narratives of the boy's small exploits and quaint sayings; and her father would answer: "You are a dear, good little girl to write me so, and of dear little *Gampy*, too, so much; *yet never enough.* God bless thee." *Gampy* was the child's mode of pronouncing *Grandpa*, and Burr never called him by any other name, unless it was Gampillus, Gampillo, Gamp, or some other variation of the same word. How proud they all were of the child's robust beauty and his quick intelligence, and, what the grandfather valued above all virtues, his courage. One scene of his early years gave Burr inexpressible delight to witness, and, in after times, to describe. The boy was playing alone in a field, with a stick in his hand, as tall as himself, while his parents and grandfather were looking on from a distance. Suddenly, a goat that was grazing near the child began to make hostile demonstrations, lowering his head and sideling up to the boy, in the way usual with irate goats before making an assault. The boy was evidently frightened. Still, he faced the enemy. The goat advanced close to him, when, just as the animal was about to open an attack, little *Gamp* lifted his stick with a mighty effort, and brought it down whack upon the goat's head, which so astonished the beast that he ran away. The child was only in his third or fourth year when this occurred. Words can not express the rapture with which the grandfather saw the boy's gallantry. From that hour he bore him in his heart of hearts, and loved all the children in the world better for this one's sake.

To add to his good fortune, his pecuniary prospects brightened, on his accession to office. New York was then a city of 65,000 inhabitants, and was advancing with great rapidity. Theodosia herself remarks, in one of her letters, that "in ten or twenty years, a nundred and thirty acres of land on New York Island will become a principality." Colonel Burr owned a large tract of land about Richmond Hill. His grounds extended to the North River, and, nearer the city, there was a piece of water upon his estate which elderly inhabitants may still

remember as the favorite skating-place of their boyhood. It was called "Burr's Pond" years after it ceased to be his, down even to the time when it was filled in, and built over. The progress of the city raised the value of all the land on the island, and particularly of that which, like Richmond Hill, lay within half-an-hour's ride of the city. About this time, Colonel Burr was much occupied with negotiating with Mr. John Jacob Astor for the sale of part of his Richmond Hill estate. At length, Mr. Astor bought all but the mansion and a few acres around it, for the sum of one hundred and forty thousand dollars. The bargain, for some reason, was afterward canceled. But, finally, the sale was completed, and Colonel Burr was, for the time, delivered from his pecuniary embarrassments. He even had thoughts of buying another estate further up the island. It is evident that his style of living was such as was then supposed to *become* an elevated station. Half a dozen horses, a town-house and country-house, a numerous retinue of servants, and a French cook, were among the sumptuosities of his establishment. Jerome Bonaparte, then on the eve of his marriage with Miss Patterson, was entertained at dinner and at breakfast by the Vice-President, who invited large companies to meet the future monarch, in whose ante-chambers Burr was, one day, to kick his heels, a suppliant for an audience.

Richmond Hill was without a mistress. In these fortunate years it was that Colonel Burr paid his court to one of the loveliest of Philadelphia's ever lovely belles, and had the narrowest escape from a second marriage.

They met, 'twas in a crowd; and each was smitten with the other's pleasant qualities. Again, he saw her at her father's table, where his attentions were equally pointed and welcome. A *tête-à-tête*, which he sought was interrupted by the entrance of *le père*, but her manner seemed to beckon him on. He was almost in love. Summoning her father to his apartments by note, and the old gentleman appearing within the hour, the enamored one came to the point with a promptness and self possession impossible in a lover under forty.

"Is Celeste engaged?"

"She is not."

"Would it be agreeable to her parents if Colonel Burr hould make overtures for her hand?"

"It would be *most* agreeable."

The lady had gone to spend some days six miles into the country, and thither her lover rides the next morning, with an eager, but composed mind. Celeste enters the drawing-room, though he had not asked especially for her. Conversation ensues. She is all wit and gayety; more charming than ever, the lover thinks. He tries to turn the conversation to the subject nearest his heart; but she, with the good-humored graceful malice of lovely woman, defeats his endeavors, and so at last, quite captivated, he takes his leave.

The same hour on the following morning finds him, once more, *tête-à-tête* with the beautiful Celeste. Conversation again. But, this time, the great question was put. To the surprise of this renowned lady-killer, Celeste replies that she is firmly resolved *never to marry!*

"I am very sorry to hear it, madam; I had promised myself great happiness, but can not blame your determination."

She replied: "No; certainly, sir, you can not; for I recollect to have heard you express surprise that any woman should marry, and you gave such reasons, and with so much eloquence, as made an indelible impression on my mind.

The disappointed swain received the rebuff with perfect courtesy and good humor. They parted the best friends.

"Have you any commands to town, madam? I wish you a good morning."

Two days passed. Then, a note from Celeste surprised the Rejected, informing him that she was in town for a few hours, and would be glad to see him. He was puzzled, and hastened to her for a solution. The interview lasted two hours, in the course of which the tender subject was daintily touched, but the lover forbore to renew his suit; and the conversation ended without result. Next day, another note from the lady, sent in from the country, expressing "an unalterable determination never again to listen to his suit, and requesting that the subject might never be renewed." Late in the evening

of the same day, on returning to his lodgings, the Vice-President learned that a boy had been three times that afternoon to deliver a message to him, but had refused to say from whom it came. At last Colonel Burr's servant had traced the boy to the town residence of Celeste. Early next morning the message came; Celeste requested an interview. Post-haste the Vice-President hied to the presence of his beloved. He found her engaged with a visitor, but observed that she was agitated upon his entrance, and impatient for the departure of her guest. At length they were alone, and he waited for her to state her reasons for desiring to see him. With extreme embarrassment, she stammered out, after several vain attempts to speak, that she feared her note had not been couched in terms sufficiently polite, and she had therefore wished for an opportunity to apologize. She could utter no more. He, expecting no such matter, stared in dumb astonishment, with an absurd half-grin upon his countenance. As she sat deeply engaged in tearing to pieces some roses, and he in pinching new corners in the rim of his hat, she all blushes and confusion, he confounded and speechless, the pair, he afterward thought, would have made a capital subject for a painter. He was the first to recover power to articulate. Denying roundly that the fatal note was any thing but polite and proper, he offered to return it, proposed that it should be considered canceled, and begged to be allowed to call the next morning, and renew his suit. To this she objected, but faintly. Waiving his request for a formal permission, he changed the subject, and, after an hour's not unpleasant conversation, took his leave.

He now confessed to Theodosia, to whom the affair had been circumstantially related, from day to day, that he was in the condition of a certain country judge before whom a cause had been too ingeniously argued by the lawyers. "Gentlemen of the jury," said the judge, "you must get along with this cause as well as you can; for my part, I'm swamped." But the sapient Theodosia was not puzzled in the least. "She meant," wrote Theo., "from the beginning to say that awful word, *yes;* but not choosing to say it immediately, she told

you that *you* had furnished her with arguments against matrimony, which in French means, Please, sir, to persuade me out of them again. But you took it as a plump refusal, and walked off. She called you back. What more could she do? I would have seen you to Japan before I should have done so much."

However, the offer of marriage was never renewed. The lover was probably himself undecided as to the desirableness of the match. But between him and Celeste there was always a tender friendship, and for many months it seemed likely enough that at some unexpected moment the conclusive word would be spoken.

To complete his good fortune, he began his official life a very popular man. He was popular with his party for giving it victory. He was admired by vast numbers of honorable men, because he had disdained to seek his own elevation by defeating the will of a majority of his countrymen. The éclât of office was added to his reputation as a soldier and as a politician; and he, of all men, seemed to be the one most likely soon to have at his disposal the favors which a President can confer. There chanced to be in 1801, before the Vice-President had yet presided over the Senate, a convention in the State of New York to make certain amendments to the Constitution. Upon the meeting of the convention the Vice-President was made chairman by a unanimous vote.

Up to this time, Aaron Burr had known little but good fortune. He had been a successful soldier, a more successful lawyer, a most successful politician. Fortunate and happy in his domestic relations, he was strengthened now by the alliance of his daughter with an ancient and wealthy family. His own estate was ample and improving. His rival and enemy was distanced. Still in the very prime of his days, there was but one more honorable distinction for him to gain, and that seemed almost within his grasp. High in the esteem of his own party, he enjoyed also the general respect of the Federalists, as being a more moderate partisan than other leading Republicans.

Such was the position of Aaron Burr in the year 1801.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CLOUDS GATHER.

The Great Error of Burr's Public Life — Distribution of the Spoils — Cheetham and the American Citizen — Burr's Course on the Judiciary Bill — The Suppressed History of Adams's Administration — Hamilton's Morbid Apprehensions — Burr at the Washington Banquet — Hamilton's New Tactics — Cheetham's Calumnies — Their Refutation — The War of Pamphlets and Newspapers — Dueling then — Hamilton's Eldest Son Falls in a Duel — Duel between John Swartwout and De Witt Clinton — Robert Swartwout and Richard Riker's Duel — Duel between Coleman and Captain Thompson — Burr Runs for Governor of New York — The Contest — Burr Defeated.

But Fortune was now tired of befriending this man. His position was imposing, but hollow. As a politician, he never had any *real* basis; such as great ideas, strong convictions, important original measures, a grand policy; nor were his peculiar gifts of a nature to charm the multitude.

Aaron Burr should never have touched politics. He had no business with politics. Having made up his mind at old Dr. Bellamy's, that Honor was the god for a gentleman, and that Chesterfield was one of his prophets, he should have been content to practice law, get a fortune, shine in society, make the tour of Europe, patronize the fine arts, give elegant dinners; and so have been the inane and aimless individual that the rich American, since the Revolution, has usually plumed himself upon being. Or, he should have emigrated to France. In soldiers, Frenchmen, and children, ambition is a nearly inevitable incentive to exertion, and therefore pardonable. But for the citizen of a free State to seek or accept high public office for any smaller object than the public good, is not pardonable, but pitiable. The fatal day in the life of Aaron Burr was not on which he and his amiable foe *both* fell on the field of honor, never to rise, but on that on which he resolved, for party and personal reasons chiefly, to turn politician.

Accursed be Politics for ever! The maëlstrom that has drawn in and engulfed so many able and worthy men. What talent it absorbs that is so needed elsewhere! How many fair reputations it has blasted! What toil, what ingenuity, what wealth, what lives have been wasted upon it! How mean are political methods and expedients, and how absurdly disproportioned are political triumphs to their cost! Politics can never be reformed. To abolish politics altogether is perhaps the atonement America is going, one day, to make to an outraged world, for sinking to the deepest deep, and wallowing in the filthiest filth of political turpitude.

Colonel Burr was now in several people's way, and measures were to be adopted to get him out of the way.

While a party is in opposition, any body who can help is welcome, and, if possible, rewarded. But when that party gets into power, and has all the great prizes to bestow; when a party nomination is equivalent to election; and when, above all, no man's help is felt to be *necessary;* the claims of the leading partizans are apt to be more closely scrutinized, and the force hitherto expended in securing triumph for the party, is devoted to gaining supremacy for the clique!

Colonel Burr was not the man that Thomas Jefferson and the Virginia politicians wanted to be the next democratic President. James Madison, then Secretary of State, and a man of immense family interest in Virginia, was the predestined candidate of the southern Republicans. Madison was Jefferson's neighbor, friend, and disciple. In New York, the Republican party, composed of three factions — Clintons, Livingstons, and Burrites — had been kept together by Colonel Burr's masterly management while there was a Federal party to be vanquished; but now that the victory was won, the elements of discord so long latent, burst into vigorous life. The Republican party of the State of New York was a unit no longer. Each of the three factions was jealous of the others, and aspired to sway the party. But, for the present, the Clintons and the Livingstons were disposed to unite their forces for the purpose of destroying Burr and his band of followers. Thus against our hero and his "myrmidons," three great pow-

ers were soon to be secretly or openly leagued; namely, first, the Virginia politicians, one of whom wielded the patronage of the Federal government; secondly, the Clintons, one of whom was Governor of the State of New York, while young De Witt Clinton was a member of the United States Senate; and, lastly, the numerous and wealthy family of the Livingstons. Each of these had darling objects, to the attainment of which Colonel Burr's present commanding position and peculiar powers were the chief obstacle.

Down with the interloper, was now the whisper that circulated among the magnates of the party, both at Washington and at Albany

In the distribution of the "spoils" of victory, many important friends of Colonel Burr were passed by, while the members and adherents of the two great families were loaded with favor. Edward Livingston was appointed mayor of the city, Chancellor Livingston went embassador to France. Brockholst Livingston and Smith Thompson, whose wife was a Livingston, were elevated to the bench of the State Supreme Court. Morgan Lewis, Dr. Tillotson, and General Armstrong, all connected by marriage with the same family, were well provided for. George Clinton was governor, De Witt Clinton was in the Senate. A large proportion of the minor city offices were given to Clintonians. The Federal offices, too, were bestowed in accordance with the same general plan of excluding the friends of Burr. Soon, Colonel Burr and John Swartwout, through Clintonian influence, lost their seats, after a hotly-contested election, as directors of the Manhattan Bank; and the influence and power of that institution were used against the man to whom it owed its existence.

It soon became apparent that the *American Citizen*, the organ of the Republican party in the city, owned by a cousin of De Witt Clinton's, was conducted wholly in the interest of that politician. It was edited by a scurrilous dog of an Englishman, named Cheetham, who began life as a hatter, and who knew as much of American politics as De Witt Clinton chose to tell him. This Cheetham fancied he had a talent for invective, and, nothing pleased him better than to make a

set-attack on some public character, in what he supposed to be the manner of Junius. Hamilton, too, had an organ, the newly-established *Evening Post*, edited by William Coleman, a lawyer, a good writer, and a gentleman.

In these circumstances, the friends of Burr, in the summer of 1802, assisted to establish the *Morning Chronicle*, which supported the administration, but was especially friendly to the Vice-President. This *Morning Chronicle* ceased, long ago, to exist, but its name, through a happy accident, will be remembered for many generations to come. It was edited by Dr. Peter Irving, and, in its columns, a younger brother of the editor, WASHINGTON IRVING, first appeared as a writer for the public. Mr. Irving was a youth of nineteen when Colonel Burr used to cut out his *Jonathan Oldstyle* essays from the *Chronicle*, and inclose them in his letters to Theodosia, with the remark that they were very good for so young a man. He was fortunate in having such a contributor. But Burr needed a fighting newspaper. Dr. Irving, in contending with such a fellow as Cheetham, labored under the crushing disadvantage of being a gentleman and a scholar.

Thus the weapons of warfare were prepared. Colonel Burr soon gave dog Cheetham an opportunity to howl the alarm.

On his way to the seat of government, in the autumn of 1801, to take his seat in the chair of the Senate, the Vice-President received from certain citizens of Baltimore one of those adulatory addresses of which Mr. Adams was so fond, and which it had been a specialty of the Republican party to denounce and ridicule. To this address Colonel Burr responded thus: "Time will not allow me to return a written answer, but I must be permitted to state my disapprobation of the mode of expressing public sentiment by addresses." This answer was in the strictest accordance with the Republican feeling of the time. But it was needlessly abrupt, and gave offense to many. It savored of Federal haughtiness, thought some, and was unbecoming a public servant. But this was a trifle.

The great measure of the session was the repeal of a judiciary bill, which passed at the close of the last Congress, by

which the number of Federal judges was increased by twenty-three. This bill had been passed by a party vote, the Republicans going against it in a body. But what made it inexpressibly odious to the new administration, and to the Republican party, was the indecent haste with which Mr. Adams, in the very last hour of his presidency, had appointed the new judges. These were the "midnight appointments" of which Mr. Jefferson so wrathfully spoke in a letter previously quoted, and which were the more offensive as the judges were appointed for life. What President, what party, could see, without disgust, twenty-three keenly-coveted life-judgeships, stolen, as it were, from the hard-won "spoils" of victory? Twenty-three such offices, skillfully bestowed, were a reserve of political capital that would suffice, alone, to turn the scale in a close contest, whether in caucus or at the polls. Enough. The party was resolved on repealing the bill, and thus annihilating the judgeships which it created. This was done, but only after a long period of exciting and acrimonious debate, during which the Vice-President, by the utter impartiality of his conduct, gave offense to both parties.

The Senate was nearly *tied* on the question, and thus it happened that at a certain stage of the bill the Vice-President had to give a casting vote. On a motion to refer the bill to a committee for amendment, the vote was fourteen to fourteen, the Federalists favoring the reference. The Vice-President said:

"I am for the affirmative, because I never can resist the reference of a measure where the Senate is so nicely balanced, and when the object is to effect amendment that may accommodate it to the opinions of a large majority, and particularly when I can believe that gentlemen are sincere in wishing a reference for this purpose. Should it, however, at any time appear that delay only is intended, my conduct will be different."

This vote produced a "sensation." The ultra Republicans condemned it, of course; and Cheetham made it the object of vituperation. The ultra Federalists rejoiced over it. Moderate men of all parties saw in it the simple discharge of an

obvious duty. As it happened, however, the vote had no results, for the arrival of a Senator, a day or two after, restored the Republican majority, and the bill was taken out of committee forthwith.

At other stages of the bill, the Vice-President's course was severely disappointing to the Federalists. On this point we have the unequaled authority of Gouveneur Morris, who, as a Federal Senator, fought for the preservation of the judgeships with all the energy of honest and disinterested conviction. He believed the nation would be disgraced by depriving men of offices which the Constitution gave them for life, and which they had accepted on that condition. Gouveneur Morris, when all was over, wrote thus to his friend, Chancellor Livingston: "There was a moment when the Vice-President might have arrested the measure by his vote, and that vote would, I believe, have made him President at the next election; but 'there is a tide in the affairs of men,' which he suffered to go by."

This reserve of power on the part of Colonel Burr was the more creditable to him from the fact that he was rather opposed to the repeal than otherwise. It is evident from his correspondence at the time, that he made the *legality* of the repeal a special subject of investigation, and, according to his wont, of consultation with the eminent lawyers of his acquaintance. To Barnabas Bidwell, he writes: "The *power* thus to deprive judges of their offices and salaries must be admitted; but whether it would be *constitutionally moral*, if I may use the expression, and, if so, whether it would be *politic* and expedient, are questions on which I could wish to be further advised. Your opinion on these points would be particularly acceptable."

To his son-in-law he expresses the same doubts, and adds "Read the Constitution, and having informed yourself of the out-of-door talk, write me how you view the thing." Mr. A. J. Dallas of Pennsylvania, a zealous and able Democrat, gave the Vice-President a decided opinion against the repeal of the bill, and in favor of amending it. Jefferson, it appears, took about the same view of the repeal as Burr, and, as the Vice-

President forbore to defeat it by his casting vote, the President refrained from killing it by his veto.

Before Cheetham had done ringing the changes on the Vice-President's alleged inconsistency on the judiciary bill, Colonel Burr gave him another subject upon which to exercise his talents.

A certain John Wood, of New York, toward the close of the year 1801, sent to press a voluminous pamphlet, entitled, "A History of the Administration of John Adams." Stupidity, Ignorance, and Falsehood combined their several powers in the production of this indigested mass of tedious lies. It was a sort of "campaign life" reversed; that is, instead of being all puff, it was all slander or misrepresentation. One sentence from this precious work will suffice to give the reader an idea of its character, and of the *good* it was likely to do to the Republican cause. After berating John Adams for many a weary page, Mr. Wood proceeded to inquire why it was that Connecticut should have been so persistent and unanimous in support of such a madman. This, he says, naturally excites our wonder and astonishment. "But the surprise of the reader will vanish when he is informed that in no part of the world the bigotry of priesthood reigns so triumphant, and that the dark shades of superstition nowhere cloud the understanding of man in such a degree, as among the unhappy natives of Connecticut."

The volume contained labored eulogies of Jefferson and Burr. The puff of the Vice-President concluded with these words: "It is impossible to draw a character of Colonel Burr in more applicable and expressive terms than Governor Livingston has done of his father: 'Though a person of a slender and delicate make, to encounter fatigue he has a heart of steel; and for the dispatch of business, the most amazing talents joined to a constancy of mind that insures success in spite of every obstacle. As long as an enterprise appears not absolutely impossible, he knows no discouragement, but, in proportion to its difficulty, augments his diligence; and by an insuperable fortitude, frequently accomplishes what his friends and acquaintances conceived utterly impracticable.'"

Colonel Burr read this work in the sheets. He saw at one glance that its publication would do the Republican party harm instead of good; particularly in New England, where he was most of all solicitous to gain adherents. He began, by this time, to understand that his future, as a politician, depended upon the Republican party's gaining such an increase of strength in New England as to counterbalance the undue influence of Virginia. With his usual promptness, but not with his usual completeness of success, he attempted to suppress the book. Twelve hundred and fifty copies had been printed. He agreed with author and publisher to pay a certain sum, on condition that the whole edition should be burned and the secret kept. Before the bargain was consummated, however, it was ascertained that information of the negotiation had been given to Duane, of the Philadelphia *Aurora*, and to our Cheetham, of the New York *Citizen*, and that certain copies had been handed about. As one of the publishers of the book had been tutor in General Hamilton's family, it may be that in this affair Hamilton repaid Burr, in kind, for his maneuvers in 1800.* Be that as it may, Burr refused to pay for the edition, and let the matter take its course.

Cheetham, first by hints and innuendoes, then by broad and reiterated assertion, assailed the Vice-President, maintaining that he had attempted to suppress the book *for the sake of shielding his new friends, the Federalists*, from the just odium which its general circulation would have excited. Here was another proof, said Cheetham, if other proof were needed, of the faithlessness of the Vice-President to his party, etc., etc. Duane, of the more decent *Aurora*, joined at last in the cry, though, at the time, he had approved of the suppression, as a letter of his to Colonel Burr still shows. His letter, dated April 15, says it was *fortunate* Wood's pamphlet had not appeared, and it would be still more fortunate if it should never appear. His paper of July 12th expresses the opinion that if the motives for the suppression of the book were not satisfac-

* Hamilton had no objection to a publication which tended to justify his own opposition to Adams. When, soon after, Wood got into prison for debt, he was released by Coleman, the editor of Hamilton's organ

torily explained to the public, Colonel Burr's standing with the Republican interest was gone.

No explanation at all was vouchsafed to a credulous public. Burr was careless of public opinion to a remarkable degree, and he was full of that pride, so common in his day, which disdains to notice newspaper comment, or any other form of popular clamor. One of the maxims which he used to recommend to his protegés was, never to apologize for or explain away a public action which might be disapproved, but let its results speak. Once, after reproving his daughter for some slight neglect, he adds, "No apologies or explanations — I hate them." Alluding to one of Cheetham's lies, he wrote to Theodosia: "They are so utterly lost on me that I should never have seen even this, but that it came inclosed to me in a letter from New York." In another letter he speaks of "some new and amusing libels against the Vice-President," which he had thought of sending her. This is, doubtless, the right temper for a man who has no favors to ask of the public; but to one whose career in life absolutely depends upon the multitude's sweet voices, it will certainly, sooner or later prove fatal. Besides, it was only this summer that Dr. Irving had got his *Morning Chronicle* fairly under way, and by that time Cheetham's calumnies had struck in past eradication.

But these were only preliminary scandals. The main attack was to come. Before proceeding to that, however, let us see what new gorgons the Vice-President's conduct was conjuring up in the morbid mind of Hamilton.

The celebration of Washington's birth-day was then more a party than a national custom, and one which the Federalists were not likely to neglect in the first year of a Republican administration. The usual banquet was held at Washington. A few days after, the rumor circulated in New York that the Vice-President had actually been present at that festival, and given a toast. "We are told here," wrote Hamilton to Bayard, "that at the close of your birth-day feast, a strange *apparition*, which was taken for the Vice-President, appeared among you, and toasted 'the union of all honest men.' I often hear at the corner of the streets important Federal se-

crets of which I am ignorant. This may be one. If the story is true, 'tis a good thing if we use it well. As an *instrument*, the person will be an auxiliary of *some* value; as a chief, he will disgrace and destroy the party. I suspect, however, the folly of the mass will make him the latter, and from the moment it shall appear that this is the plan, it may be depended upon, much more will be lost than gained. I know of no important character who has a less *founded* interest than the man in question. His talents may do well enough for a particular plot, but they are ill-suited for a great and wise drama. But what has wisdom to do with weak men?"

That remark about Burr's talents being better adapted to a particular plot, than to a "great and wise drama," is one of the truest ever made by Hamilton of his antagonist.

To Gouveneur Morris, Hamilton writes in a similar strain. He fears that some *new* intrigue is hatching between Burr and the Federalists. If not, what meant the "apparition?" He adds, that if Burr should form a third party, "we may think it worth while *to purchase him with his flying squadrons.*" Hamilton's main idea was: Let us use Burr as a means of *our* elevation, not let him use *us* as a means of his own.

It was again the sensible Mr. Bayard's privilege to allay Hamilton's apprehensions. In reply to the latter's "apparition" letter, he wrote as follows: "The apprehensions you appear to entertain of the effect of the intrigues of a certain person, if you will take my word for it, are wholly without ground. In fact, little has been attempted and nothing accomplished. I answer only for the time present, because I believe the gentleman is waiting to see the result of the new state of things more completely developed before he decides upon the course he will pursue. The *apparition* in the *after piece* was not unexpected, but the toast was.

"An intimation was given that, if he was sensible of no impropriety in being our guest upon the occasion, his company would be very acceptable; our calculation was that he had less chance of gaining than losing by accepting the invitation. We knew *the impression which the coincidence of circumstances would make on a certain great personage*, how

readily that impression would be communicated to the proud and aspiring lords of the ancient dominion, and we have not been mistaken as to the jealousy we expected it would excite through the party.

"Be assured, the apparition was much less frightful to those who saw it than to many who heard of the place where it appeared. The toast was indiscreet, and extremely well calculated to answer our views. It will not be an easy task to impose upon the Federalists here, united and communicative as they are at present; and you may rely, that no eagerness to recover lost power will betray them into any doctrines or compromises repugnant or dangerous to their former principles. We shall probably pay more attention to public opinion than we have hitherto done, and take more pains not merely to do right things, but to do them in an acceptable manner."

That such a pother should arise from a Vice-President of the United States attending a banquet in honor of George Washington, gives the modern reader an idea of the reality of the political differences of that day, which we can the better understand from the fact, that such differences are again becoming real. Colonel Burr had a reason for attending this banquet of a personal kind. The Federal members of the House who gave the banquet, and who invited the Vice-President to attend it, were the very men who, a year ago, had sat a week trying to make him President. Who was the *intriguer* in this business, Bayard or Burr?

Hamilton's rejoinder to Bayard, is one of the most characteristic epistles he ever wrote. It is eminently amiable and absurd. He says that Bayard's explanation has allayed his fear. He then proceeds to divulge an elaborate plan for bringing the country back again to its former Federal principles. We must change our tactics, he begins. We have relied too much upon the mere excellence of our measures. Men are reasoning, but not reasonable creatures. While we have appealed solely to the reason, our opponents have flattered the vanity of the people, and the consequence is we are prostrate, and they are triumphant. We must be more *politic*, my dear sir. Nothing wrong must be done, of course; but we must

meet art with art, and defeat trick with trick; that is, as far as we can do so innocently. After a prologue of this description, comes the play. He suggests the formation of a "Christian Constitutional Society," with a president and council of twelve at Washington, a vice-president and sub-council of twelve in each State, and as many local branches as may be necessary. The object of this grand association was to be, ostensibly, first, the support of the Christian religion; secondly, the support of the Constitution of the United States The *real* object, of course, was to turn out the vulgar, odious "Jacobins," and raise to power once more the virtuous and polite Federalists. This was to be done by diffusing information, by getting good men elected to office, and by promoting charitable institutions, particularly in cities. As a proof how much the cities needed looking after, Hamilton revives the story of the *plot* which was said to have been formed, during the presidential suspense of 1801, to seize and "cut off" the leading Federalists.

This reads very much like imbecility. One would have supposed the Federalists had had enough of secret societies, in their early experiences with regard to the Cincinnati. And how Hamilton had denounced the American imitations of the French Jacobin clubs! Bayard set him right once more, by telling him decidedly that his Club scheme would not do. Let us wait, said Bayard, and the enemy will soon show the country that we are the party to give it prosperity.

The country, meanwhile, was obstinately prosperous, and unreasonably peaceful, and madly confident of the ability and patriotism of the administration. But there was a gleam of hope for the Federalists still. In the summer of 1802, a rumor was flying about among them that there was division in the enemy's camp; the President and Vice-President had quarreled! In June, Hamilton writes a doleful letter to Rufus King about affairs political, which thus concludes:

"There is, however, a circumstance which may accelerate the fall of the present party. There is certainly a most serious schism between the chief and his heir-apparent; a schism absolutely incurable, because founded in the hearts of both, in

the rivalship of an insatiable and unprincipled ambition. The effects are already apparent, and are ripening into a more bitter animosity between the partizans of the two men than ever existed between the Federalists and anti-Federalists.

"Unluckily, we are not as neutral to this quarrel as we ought to be. You saw, however, how far our friends in Congress went in polluting themselves with the support of the second personage for the presidency. The cabal did not terminate there. Several men, of no inconsiderable importance among us, like the enterprising and adventurous character of this man, and hope to soar with him into power. Many more, through hatred to the chief, and through an impatience to recover the reins, are linking themselves to the new chief almost without perceiving it, and professing to have no other object than to make use of him; while he knows that he is making use of them. What this may end in, it is difficult to perceive."

The truth about all this is now sufficiently apparent. The President and Vice-President were on about the same terms as before. Colonel Burr dined at the White House twice a month, and with the members of the cabinet about once a year. Between himself and Mr. Madison there was an appearance of friendliness, and a growing reality of reserve. Theodosia and the beautiful Mrs. Madison seem to have been on terms of considerable intimacy. But Jefferson, partly for personal, chiefly for patriotic reasons, wished the Virginia politicians to continue the democratic rule. It was apparent to Burr that their political projects were incompatible, and he began to look, more and more, to the northern States for support, knowing that nothing but the impossibility of carrying an election without him would secure him the support of the Virginians. The two chiefs were, therefore, at cross purposes, so far as party management was concerned; and there is no question that Jefferson now felt that repugnance to Burr which their uncongenial natures must, in almost any circumstances, have generated. But they never quarreled. Down to Burr's last visit to Philadelphia, in 1806, he called on and dined with the President quite as usual. Burr, it must be

remembered, could not be, like Madison or Monroe, a satellite His aim was to be an independent power in politics.

To return to Cheetham. Continuing his attack on the Vice-President, he brought out his most damaging accusation, which was, that Colonel Burr, during the tie period, had intrigued for electoral votes, with the design to defraud Jefferson of the presidency. The charge was made with staggering positiveness, and desperate pertinacity. This scandal was Cheetham's master-piece, and the public mind, by his previous efforts, though not convinced, had become prepared to receive it. The better to effect his purpose, he wrote a series of "Nine Letters," in which he professed to give a history of Colonel Burr's political life, but every page of which showed the man's ignorance of the subject upon which he was writing. These letters were afterward published in a pamphlet, which became, for awhile, the town-talk, and had a cónsiderable circulation at all the political centers.

For the purpose of showing the caliber and style of Cheetham, and his slight acquaintance with the political history of the times, I will copy a passage from his fifth epistle, which is in his very best *Junius* style. It contains just that mixture of truth and falsehood which marks the productions of unscrupulous scribes, who are hired to clothe with words the ideas of their masters. Cheetham was a boy of seventeen when Colonel Burr began his political life. He was just of age when Burr went to the Senate, and was never in a position to have any personal knowledge of interior politics.

Thus Cheetham, in his fifth epistle: "Your activity," said this Junius Americanus, addressing the Vice-President, "was uniformly apportioned to your selfishness. You were never active but when you had personal favors to expect. At the election for governor, in 1792, after the Federalists refused to accept you as their candidate, you were not to be seen, and scarcely to be heard of. In 1795, when the Republicans made choice of Judge Yates in preference to yourself, you retired in dudgeon, and neither moved your lips nor lifted your pen in favor of his election. In 1796, you rendered no assistance to he Republicans at the election for Assembly-men. In 1797

you manifested some concern for, and contributed your mite to the success of, the Republican ticket; but let it be remembered that you were that year a candidate for the Assembly! In 1798, the darkest period the Union has seen since the Revolution, you neither appeared at the Republican meetings nor at the polls, you neither planned in the cabinet nor acted in the field. If you were then eloquent, it was the eloquence of the grave. At that portentous period, when the greatest exertions were made necessary, you manifested none. In 1799 you were still in your shell; you were neither seen at the Ward assemblies nor on the election ground. But in 1800 you were all activity and zeal. Every ligament of your frame was brought into action. You devoted night and day to the success of the Republican ticket. You attended all our meetings, and harangued the assembled citizens at most. You even stood at the polls and challenged voters. All this was admired, since, without looking at the motive, it was serviceable. We give you full credit for your zeal and activity on the occasion, especially as it was the *first time* you exhibited either. But even here you were the same man. You were *peculiarly* interested in the success of the election. You knew that you would be a candidate for the Vice-Presidency, and you, with the country at large, were of opinion that the success of the presidential election depended principally on our triumph in that of our city. You had made nice calculations on this subject, and very clearly foresaw the necessity for herculean exertions. Accordingly, you were all animation. You were first at the meeting, first at the polls. While our citizens applauded your conduct, they were ignorant of your motives; they knew little of your real character; it had been carefully enveloped in mystery. Like theirs, they fondly imagined that *your* zeal and industry were the effect of pure and disinterested patriotism. Alas! sir, they knew you not.

And so on, from the beginning to the end of the nine letters.

Cheetham's main charge may be divided into two counts; first, that Colonel Burr ntrigued for Federal votes; secondly, that he intrigued for Republican votes. Than the first count,

no accusation made against a politician was ever so slenderly supported by evidence, or refuted by evidence so various, so unequivocal, so lavishly superfluous in quantity. In the course of the discussion which arose, every person who *coula* have been concerned in the alleged intrigue — Burr's intimate friends, the leading Federalists, members of the House who held optional votes — denied in terms positive and unequivocal, in the public press and over their own signatures, that they had either taken part in, or had any knowledge of, any intrigue or bargain between Colonel Burr and the Federalists, or between the friends of Colonel Burr and the Federalists, during the period referred to, or at any time preceding it.

David A. Ogden was accused of having been an agent of the negotiation. In the *Morning Chronicle* of November 25th, 1802, Mr. Ogden said: "When about to return from the city of Washington, two or three members of Congress, of the Federal party, spoke to me about their views as to the election of President, desiring me to converse with Colonel Burr on the subject, and to ascertain whether he would enter into terms. On my return to New York I called on Colonel Burr, and communicated the above to him. He explicitly declined the explanation, and did neither propose nor agree to any terms. I had no other interview or communication with him on the subjeet; and so little was I satisfied with this, that in a letter which I soon afterward wrote to a member of Congress, and which was the only one I wrote, I dissuaded him from giving his support to Colonel Burr, and advised rather to acquiesce in the election of Mr. Jefferson, as the less dangerous man of the two."

Edward Livingston, John Swartwout, William P. Van Ness Matthew L. Davis, and others, declared the innocence of Burr in language equally explicit. Hamilton himself publicly avowed, in the *Evening Post*, that he had no personal knowledge of, or belief in, the existence of any negotiations between Colonel Burr and the members of the Federal party

Mr. Bayard of Delaware, who had been in a position to know more of the tie affair than any other man, and who had finally given the election to Jefferson, re-stated all that had

occurred in the most minute and circumstantial manner, in a formal affidavit. "I took pains," said Mr. Bayard, "to disclose the state of things (in the Federal caucus) in such a manner that it might be known to the friends of Mr. Burr, and to those gentlemen who were believed to be most disposed to change their votes in his favor. I repeatedly stated to many gentlemen with whom I was acting, that it was a vain thing to protract the election, as it had become manifest that Mr. Burr would not assist us, and as we could do nothing without his aid. I expected, under those circumstances, if there was any latent engines at work in Mr. Burr's favor, the plan of operations would be disclosed to me; but, although I had the power, and threatened to terminate the election, I had not even an intimation from any friend of Mr. Burr's that it would be desirable to them to protract it. I never did discover that Mr. Burr used the least influence to promote the object we had in view. And being completely persuaded that Mr. Burr would not coöperate with us, I determined to end the contest by voting for Mr. Jefferson. * * * I have no reason to believe, and never did think that he interfered, even to the point of personal influence, to obstruct the election of Mr. Jefferson or to promote his own."

On another occasion, Mr. Bayard deposed: "Early in the election it was reported that Mr. Edward Livingston, the representative of the city of New York, was the confidential agent for Mr. Burr, and that Mr. Burr had committed himself entirely to the discretion of Mr. Livingston, having agreed to adopt all his acts. I took an occasion to sound Mr. Livingston on the subject, and intimated that, having it my power to terminate the contest, I should do so, unless he could give me some assurance that we might calculate upon a change in the votes of some of the members of his party. Mr. Livingston stated that he felt no great concern as to the event of the election, but he disclaimed any agency from Mr. Burr, or any connection with him on the subject, and any knowledge of Mr. Burr's designing to coöperate in support of his election."

This volume would not contain the printed matter which Cheetham's accusation called forth. Mr. Van Ness wrote a

vigorous, nay a *savage*, pamphlet in reply to Cheetham, which added fuel to the flames of passion, but, probably, effected little else. To argument, to solemn deposition, to circumstantial affidavit, Cheetham's too effectual response was an endless reiteration of the charge. For awhile, Colonel Burr maintained his usual silence. Late in September, when the mean contest had been waging for several weeks, he was induced to write a brief denial in a letter to his friend, Governor Bloomfield of New Jersey. "You are at liberty," he said, "to declare from me that all those charges and insinuations which aver or intimate that I advised or countenanced the opposition made to Mr. Jefferson pending the late election and balloting for President; that I proposed or agreed to any terms with the Federal party; that I assented to be held up in opposition to him, or attempted to withdraw from him the vote or support of any man, whether in or out of Congress; that all such assertions and intimations are false and groundless."

With regard to Cheetham's second count, namely, that Burr intrigued for *Republican* votes, a few words must be added. It is equally unsupported by evidence. It is, I am convinced, equally false. General Smith, of Maryland, who was Burr's proxy in the House, declared in the *Evening Post*, while the controversy was in full tide:

"Mr. Burr never visited me on the subject of the late election for President and Vice-President — Mr. Burr never conversed with me a single second on the subject of that election, either before or since the event."

That Burr himself was passive — that he observed rigorously the morality and the etiquette of a situation novel and bewildering, is a fact which became apparent to me by reading the writings of his enemies, and will become apparent to any candid person who will take the same trouble. But it is true that John Swartwout, General Van Ness, and others of Burr's set, most ardently desired the elevation of their chief to the presidency. It is true that they believed he ought to be elected, rather than have no President. It is true, as John Swartwout, with his usual frankness publicly avowed, that

they thought it would not have been in the least dishonorable, if they *had* promoted and secured his election. It is *probably* true, that, after several fruitless ballotings had spread abroad the impression that Jefferson could not be elected, both Swartwout and Van Ness wrote letters to Republican members of the House, urging them to give up Jefferson and elect Burr. Of this they were so far from being ashamed, that they gave permission to all their correspondents to publish any letters of theirs on public subjects, which had been written during the time it was alleged the intrigue had occurred.

Readers who have reached the prime of life, can look back to the time when John Quincy Adams was elected President by the House of Representatives, through the casting vote of Henry Clay, who was immediately appointed Secretary of State by the new President. They can remember how, during the next four years, the opposition press rang with the charge of "bargain and corruption." That charge, mean, and groundless as it was, turned one of the two men out of the presidency, and *kept* out the other, through twenty years of such popularity as no other partisan has ever enjoyed with the enlightened portion of the American people. From that, we of this generation may form an idea of the effect which Cheetham's accusation, taken up by other papers and ceaselessly repeated, had upon the political fortunes of Aaron Burr. He had not the wealth of popularity to draw upon which gathered round Henry Clay's magnificent form and generous, gallant heart; and if Clay's electric name was not proof against base and baseless scandal, is it wonderful that the luster of Burr's not untarnished fame should have been diminished by it beyond remedy?

Bitter and deadly, beyond what the modern reader can imagine, were the political controversies of that period. The law of the pistol was in full force. In 1801, Hamilton's eldest son, a high-spirited youth of twenty, fell in a duel which arose from a political dispute at the theater. "He was murdered in a duel," said Coleman, of the *Evening Post*, who that very month had threatened Cheetham with a challenge, and who

the next day spoke of "the insolent vulgarity of that base wretch."*

The duel between John Swartwout and De Witt Clinton, which occurred amid the heat and violence of 1802, was the most remarkable conflict of the kind which has ever occurred, this side of the Emerald Isle. Clinton was a strong-headed and bitter-tongued politician. Swartwout was a frank hearted, brave man, devoted to Burr with a disinterested enthusiasm that stood all the tests to which friendship can ever be subjected. He saw with furious disgust the efforts of De Witt Clinton's creatures to blacken Burr's reputation, and had himself experienced the effects of his hostility. Clinton hearing that Swartwout had accused him of opposing Burr on ground personal and selfish, called him "a liar, a scoundrel, and a villain." This was reported to Swartwout, and a duel was the result.

What occurred at the ground at Weehawken, was stated in the newspapers of the day by Colonel Smith, Swartwout's second: "The gentlemen took their stations — were each presented with a pistol, and, by order, faced to the right, and fired, ineffectually. At the request of Mr. Riker, I asked Mr. Swartwout, 'Are you satisfied, sir?' He answered, 'I am not.' The pistols then being exchanged, and their positions resumed, by order, the gentlemen faced to the right, and fired a second shot, without effect. At the request of Mr. Riker, I again addressed Mr. Swartwout, 'Are you satisfied, sir?' He answered strongly in the negative, we proceeded, and a third shot was exchanged, without injury. At the request of Mr. Riker, I again asked Mr. Swartwout, 'Are you satisfied, sir?' He answered, 'I am not — neither shall I be, until that apology is made which I have demanded. Until then we must proceed.' I then presented a paper to Mr. Riker, containing

* The following epigram appeared in the *Evening Post*, a little later:

"Lie on Duane, lie on for pay,
And Cheetham, lie thou too;
More against truth you can not say,
Than truth can say 'gainst you"

the apology demanded, for Mr. Clinton's signature, observing, that we could not spend our time in conversation; that this paper must be signed or proceed. Mr. Clinton declared he would not sign any paper on the subject — that he had no animosity against Mr. Swartwout — would willingly shako hands and agree to meet on the score of former friendship.

"Mr. Swartwout insisting on his signature to the apology, and Mr. Clinton declining, they stood at their posts and fired a fourth shot. Mr. Clinton's ball struck Mr. Swartwout's left leg, about five inches below the knee; — he stood ready and collected. At the request of Mr. Riker, I again addressed Mr. Swartwout, 'Are you satisfied, sir?' He answered, that 'It was useless to repeat the question — my determination is fixed — and I beg we may proceed.' Mr. Clinton repeated that he had no animosity against Mr. Swartwout — was sorry for what had passed — proposed to advance, shake hands, and bury the circumstance in oblivion. During this conversation, Mr. Swartwout's surgeon, kneeling by his side, extracted the ball from the opposite side of his leg. Mr. Swartwout standing erect on his post, and positively declining any thing short of an ample apology, they fired the fifth shot, and Mr. Swartwout received the ball in the left leg, about five inches above the ancle; still, however, standing steadily at his post, perfectly composed. At the request of Mr. Riker, I again addressed Mr. Swartwout, 'Are you satisfied, sir?' He forcibly answered, 'I am not, sir; proceed.' Mr. Clinton then quit his station, declined the combat, and declared he would fire no more. Mr. Swartwout declared himself surprised, that Mr. Clinton would neither apologize nor give him the satisfaction required; and addressing me, said, 'What shall I do, my friend?' I answered, 'Mr Clinton declines making the apology required — refuses taking his position — and positively declares he will fight no more; and his second appearing to acquiesce in the disposition of his principal, there is nothing further left for you *now*, but to have your wounds dressed.' The surgeons attended, dressed Mr. Swartwout's wounds, and the gentlemen in their respective barges, returned to the city."

An *on dit* of the day was, that Clinton said, during the progress of the duel, "I wish I had the *principal* here," referring to Colonel Burr.

The next year, De Witt Clinton was challenged by Senator Jonathan Dayton, of New Jersey, another of Burr's intimates, but the affair was peacefully arranged. The year following, Robert Swartwout fought with Richard Riker, a zealous Clintonian, who had served as second to Clinton in his duel with John Swartwout. In this duel, Riker was severely wounded, but he recovered to sit for many years on the Recorder's bench in the city of New York. The same year, Coleman of the *Evening Post*, provoked beyond endurance by an attack of surpassing malignancy in the *American Citizen*, forgot himself so far as to challenge Cheetham. But the cur could not be brought to bay. "Friends interfered," a truce was patched up, and Cheetham agreed to behave better in future.

Out of this affair, however, another quarrel grew, which led to one of the most diabolical duels ever fought. Captain Thompson, harbor-master of New York, loudly espoused Cheetham's cause, and gave out that it was Coleman, not Cheetham, that had showed the white feather. Coleman heard of it, and challenged him. The twilight of a winter's evening found the parties arrayed against each other in lonely "Love-lane," now called "Twenty-first-street." It was cold, there was snow on the ground, and it was nearly dark. A shot or two was exchanged without effect, and then the principals were placed nearer together, that they might see one another better. At length Thompson was heard to cry, "I've got it," and fell headlong on the snow. Coleman and his second hurried away, while the surgeon raised the bleeding man, examined his wound, and saw that it was mortal. On learning his fate, Thompson, at the surgeon's suggestion, promised never to divulge the names of the parties, and, with a heroism worthy of a better cause, he kept his word. "He was brought, mortally wounded, to his sister's house in town: he was laid at the door, the bell was rung, the family came out, and found him bleeding and near his death. He refused to name his

antagonist, or give any account of the affair, declaring that every thing which had been done was honorably done, and desired that no attempt should be made to seek out or molest his adversary."*

To such lengths can political fury drive men of honor, education and humanity. Let us hasten past these deplorable scenes.

Three years of Colonel Burr's Vice-Presidency passed in these contentions. They told upon his popularity. As the time for selecting candidates for the presidential campaign drew on, it became manifest that he could not secure the undivided support of the Republican party for a second term. His career was interrupted. He must pause a while. By some other, and longer, and more circuitous path he must continue his ascent to that top-most, dazzling height, which has lured so many Americans to falseness of life and meanness of aim. The course which he pursued, in these circumstances, was precisely what fidelity to his party would have dictated.

Toward the close of January, 1804, he requested a private interview with the President. On the designated evening, the two chiefs met, and had a long conversation. The account which Mr. Jefferson left of this interview is doubtless, in the main particulars, correct, but some of the minor circumstances are evidently colored by his natural dislike of a man who, he thought, had been his rival without being his equal. No man *can* write quite fairly of one whom he hates, despises, or fears.

Colonel Burr began the conversation by sketching his political career in New York, dwelling particularly on the late crusade against him. He proceeded to say, among other things, that his attachment to Mr. Jefferson had been sincere, and that he had keenly enjoyed his company and conversation. His feelings had undergone no change, although "many little stories" had been carried to him, and, he supposed, to Mr. Jefferson also, which he despised. But attachment must be reciprocal or cease to exist, and therefore he desired to know whether any change had taken place in the feelings of Mr

* "Reminiscences of the *Evening Post*." By W. C. Bryant.

Jefferson toward himself. "He reminded me," says Jefferson, "of a letter written to him about the time of counting the votes, mentioning that his election had left a chasm in my arrangements; that I had lost him from my list in the administration, etc. He observed, he believed it would be for the interest of the Republican cause for him to retire; that a disadvantageous schism would otherwise take place; but that were he to retire, it would be said he shrunk from the public sentence, which he would never do; that his enemies were using my name to destroy him, and something was necessary from me to prevent and deprive them of that weapon, some mark of favor from me which would declare to the world that he retired with my confidence."

The President replied at great length. Waiving Burr's inquiry respecting his personal feelings, he said, that, as he had not interfered in the election of 1800, so he was resolved not to influence the one which was then impending. He did not know who were to be candidates, and never permitted any one to converse with him on the subject. With regard to the attacks which the press had made upon the Vice-President, he had noticed them but as the passing wind. He had seen complaints that Cheetham, employed in publishing the laws, should be permitted to eat the public bread, and abuse its second officer. But the laws were published in some papers which abused the President continually, and, as he had never thought proper to interfere for himself, he had not deemed it his duty to do so in the case of the Vice-President.

"I now," continues Mr. Jefferson, "went on to explain to him verbally what I meant by saying I had lost him from my list. That in General Washington's time, it had been signified to him that Mr. Adams, the Vice-President, would be glad of a foreign embassy; that General Washington mentioned it to me, expressed his doubts whether Mr. Adams was a fit character for such an office, and his still greater doubts, indeed, his conviction, that it would not be justifiable to send away the person who, in case of his death, was provided by the Constitution to take his place; that it would, moreover, appear indecent for him to be disposing of the public trusts in ap-

parently buying off a competitor for the public favor. I concurred with him in the opinion, and if I recollect rightly, Hamilton, Knox, and Randolph were consulted, and gave the same opinions. That when Mr. Adams came to the administration, in his first interview with me, he mentioned the necessity of a mission to France, and how desirable it would have been for him if he could have got me to undertake it; but that he conceived it would be wrong in him to send me away, and assigned the same reasons General Washington had done; and, therefore, he should appoint Mr. Madison, etc. That I had myself contemplated his (Colonel Burr's) appointment to one of the great offices, in case he was not elected Vice-President, but that as soon as that election was known, I saw that it could not be done, for the good reasons which had led General Washington and Mr. Adams to the same conclusion; and, therefore, in my first letter to Colonel Burr after the issue was known, I had mentioned to him that a chasm in my arrangements had been produced by this event. I was thus particular in rectifying the date of this letter, because it gave me an opportunity of explaining the grounds on which it was written, which were, indirectly, *an answer to his present hints.* He left the matter with me for consideration, and the conversation was turned to indifferent subjects."

Mr. Jefferson concludes this day's journalizing with the following remarks: "I had never seen Colonel Burr till he came as a member of the Senate. His conduct very soon inspired me with distrust. I habitually cautioned Mr. Madison against trusting him too much. I saw, afterward, that, under General Washington's and Mr. Adams's administrations, whenever a great military appointment, or a diplomatic one was to be made, he came post to Philadelphia to show himself, and, in fact, that he was always at market, if they had wanted him. He was, indeed, told by Dayton, in 1800, he might be Secretary at War; but this bid was too late. His election as Vice-President was then foreseen. With these impressions of Colonel Burr, there never had been an intimacy between us, and but little association. When I destined him for a high appointment, it was out of respect for the favor he had obtained

with the Republican party, by his extraordinary exertions and successes in the New York election in 1800."

Mr. Jefferson's memory was a little at fault here. While the Republican party was slowly working its way to a majority, and the effective help of Colonel Burr was given freely to the cause, Jefferson's manner toward him was cordial to a somewhat marked degree. In June, 1797, for example, he began a long and unsolicited letter to Colonel Burr, with these words: "The newspapers give so minutely what is passing in Congress, that nothing of detail can be wanting for your information. Perhaps, however, some general view of our situation and prospects since you left us may not be unacceptable. At any rate, it will give me an opportunity of recalling myself to your memory, and of evidencing my esteem for you."

A few slips of this kind are all the Federal writers have to support their charge against Jefferson of insincerity. One needs little observation of life, and less charity, to give them a very different interpretation. And, after all, the discrepancy is not great. In 1797, he had an *esteem* for Colonel Burr; in 1804, he says he had never *liked* him, and had cautioned Madison against trusting him *too far*. Liking and esteeming are sentiments so different that either may exist in a high degree without the other. In 1804, it is plain, Jefferson's dislike of Burr was extreme, perhaps morbid, and De Witt Clinton himself was not more averse to his further political advancement. Jefferson admits, in one of his later letters, that upon learning Burr's designs, after their interview, it was he who caused information of the same to be sent to the Clintons in New York.

Repulsed by the chief, hated by the Republican leaders in his own State, distrusted by large numbers of the party, Colonel Burr and his friends resolved upon an appeal to the people. In February the plan was matured, and Burr was announced as an independent candidate for the governorship of New York. A small caucus of members of the legislature formally nominated him on the 18th of February, and on subsequent days the nomination was ratified by public meetings in

Albany and New York. "Say to your husband," wrote Burr to his daughter, on the 13th, "that the Clintons, Livingstons, etc., had not, at the last advice from Albany, decided on their candidate for governor. Hamilton is intriguing for any candidate who can have a chance of success against A. B. He would, doubtless, become the advocate of even De Witt Clinton, if he should be the opponent."

This was true. Hamilton saw the *ulterior* advantages which the election of Burr as governor would give him, and he opposed it in all ways, and with the whole weight of his influence. The Federal party, reduced now to a faction, had no serious thoughts of even nominating a candidate, and Hamilton's efforts were concentrated on the single object of defeating Burr. Governor Clinton declined a reëlection. Lansing, a politician of long experience and high respectability, was the candidate first named by the Republicans, and Hamilton was strenuous, in caucus and out of caucus, in urging the Federalists to vote for him. A short article of Hamilton's on this point, which has been thought worthy of republication in his works, gives eight reasons "why it is desirable that Mr. Lansing, rather than Colonel Burr, should succeed." To complete the evidence in the great case of Hamilton against Burr, this catalogue of "Reasons" is here inserted:

"1. Colonel Burr has steadily pursued the track of democratic politics. This he had done either from *principle* or from *calculation*. If the former, he is not likely now to change his plan, when the Federalists are prostrate, and their enemies predominant. If the latter, he will certainly not at this time relinquish the ladder of his ambition, and espouse the cause or views of the weaker party.

"2. Though detested by some of the leading Clintonians, he is certainly not personally disagreeable to the great body of them, and it will be no difficult task for a man of talents, intrigue, and address, possessing the chair of government, to rally the great body of them under his standard, and thereby to consolidate for personal purposes the mass of the Clintonians, his own adherents among the Democrats, and such Fed-

eralists, as, from personal good-will or interested motives, may give him support.

"3. The effect of his elevation will be to reunite, under a more adroit, able, and daring chief, the now scattered fragments of the democratic party, and to reinforce it by a strong detachment from the Federalists. For though virtuous Federalists who, from miscalculation, may support him, would afterward relinquish his standard, a large number, from various motives, would continue attached to it.

"4. A further effect of his elevation, by aid of the Federalists will be to present to the confidence of New England a man already the man of the democratic leaders of that country, and toward whom the mass of the people have no weak predilection, as their countryman, as the grandson of President Edwards, and the son of President Burr. In vain will certain men resist this predilection, when it can be said that he was chosen Governor of this State, in which he was best known, principally, or in a great degree, by the aid of the Federalists.

"5. This will give him fair play to disorganize New England, if so disposed; a thing not very difficult, when the strength of the democratic party in each of the New England States is considered, and the natural tendency of our civil institutions is duly weighed.

"6. The ill-opinion of Jefferson, and the jealousy of the ambition of Virginia, is no inconsiderable prop of good principles in that country. But these causes are leading to an opinion, that a dismemberment of the Union is expedient. It would probably suit Mr. Burr's views to promote this result, to be the chief of the northern portion; and placed at the head of the State of New York, no man would be more likely to succeed.

"7. If he be truly, as the Federalists have believed, a man of irregular and insatiable ambition, if his plan has been to rise to power on the ladder of Jacobinic principles, it is natural to conclude that he will endeavor to fix himself in power by the same instrument; that he will not lean on a fallen and falling party, generally speaking, not of a character to favor usurpa

tion and the ascendency of a despotic chief. Every day shows, more and more, the much to be regretted tendency of governments entirely popular, to dissolution and disorder. Is it rational to expect that a man, who had the sagacity to foresee this tendency, and whose temper would permit him to bottom his aggrandizement on popular prejudice and vices, would desert the system at the time when, more than ever, the state of things invites him to adhere to it?

"8. If Lansing is governor, his personal character affords some security against pernicious extremes, and at the same time renders it morally certain that the democratic party, already much divided and weakened, will molder and break asunder more and more. This is certainly a state of things favorable to the future ascendency of the wise and good. May it not lead to a recasting of parties, by which the Federalists will gain a great accession of force from former opponents? At any rate, is it not wiser in them to promote a course of things by which schism among the Democrats will be fostered and increased, than, on a fair calculation, to give them a chief, better able than any they have yet had, to unite and direct them; and in a situation to infuse rottenness in the only part of our country which still remains sound, the Federal States of New England?"

This article was written too soon; for, in a few days, Mr. Lansing, much to Hamilton's regret, declined, and Chief Justice Lewis was nominated in his stead. Lewis was a more decided partisan, and a less acceptable man than Lansing, and his nomination was supposed to be favorable to the prospects of Colonel Burr. "From the moment Clinton declined," wrote Hamilton to Rufus King, "I began to consider Burr as having a chance of success. It was still, however, my reliance that Lansing would outrun him; but now that Chief Justice Lewis is his competitor, the probability, in my judgment, inclines to Burr." To defeat him, Hamilton's first scheme was to run Rufus King as the regular candidate of the Federal party. That abandoned, he confined his exertions to keeping as many Federal voters as possible from supporting the detested candidate.

I need not dwell on the contest, the result of which is only too well known. Like nine out of ten of our State, and seven out of ten of our national elections, it was a contest without an idea; a preposterous struggle to put another man in a place already well-filled.

The Address put forth by the Burrites dwelt upon their candidate's being a *single* man, with no train of family connections to quarter upon the public treasury; upon his talents and revolutionary services; upon the stand he had made against the British treaty; upon the recent endeavors, on the part of wealthy factions, to destroy, by unprecedented calumnies, the confidence of the people in the Vice-President's integrity; upon his liberal patronage of science and the fine arts; upon the recent sale of part of his estate, and the payment of his debts; upon his known generosity and disinterestedness; and, finally, upon the character of his great ancestors, President Burr and President Edwards, the best traits of both of whom, said the Address, were blended in the character of Colonel Burr.

It was an animated and very acrimonious contest. Burr's friends, it is true, conducted their canvass with decorum, and never once assailed the private character of the opposing candidate. But Cheetham teemed with lies. For two months, his paper was chiefly devoted to maligning and burlesqueing the character of Burr and his adherents. Jefferson gave the weight of his great name to the Clintonian candidate. A conversation in which the President was represented as declaring that the "*Little Band*" (Cheetham's nickname for Burr's set) was *not* the real democracy, was printed in capitals in the *American Citizen*, and kept standing during the three days of the election.* Not content with what his paper could effect, Cheetham, on the second day of the election, printed a handbill, setting forth that Burr was a remorseless and wholesale seducer; that the brothels of New York were filled

* One of Cheetham's fables was, that on the night before the election, the Vice-President, through Alexis, his slave, had given a ball to the colored voters at Richmond Hill, and that he had himself led out to the dance a buxom wench. This story was given as a bulletin in the *American Citizen*.

with his victims, and that the father of one of them was at that moment in the city burning to wreak a deadly vengeance upon the seducer's head. This handbill Cheetham distributed with his own hands at the polls.

But the "Little Band" were confident of success, and worked for it as men seldom work for the advantage of an other.

Burr himself was, as usual, imperturbable. March 28th he wrote to Theodosia: "They are very busy here about an election between Morgan Lewis and A. Burr, the former supported by the Livingstons and Clintons, the latter *per se*. I would send you some new and amusing libels against the Vice-President, but, as you did not send the speech," etc. April 25th, which was the second day of the election: "I write in a storm; an election storm, of the like you have once been a witness. The thing began yesterday and will terminate to-morrow. My head-quarters are in John-street, and I have, since the beginning of this letter, been already three times interrupted. * * * Both parties claim majorities, and there never was, in my opinion, an election, of the result of which so little judgment could be formed. A. B. will have a small majority in the city *if to-morrow should be a fair day*, and not else." The morrow *was* a fair day. A. B. *did* have a small majority (about one hundred) in the city. For a few hours, the Burrites exulted; but returns from the country soon changed their note. Five days after, among the gossipy paragraphs of an unusually gossipy letter from Burr to his daughter, occurred this single line about the election: "The election is lost by a great majority; *so much the better*." Lewis had, in fact, received 35,000 votes; Burr, 28,000; majority for Lewis, 7,000.

He was beaten, but, by no means, destroyed, as is usually represented. A large number of his original supporters had abandoned him; but, besides his own peculiar adherents, he was now strong in the confidence of the more moderate Federalists, and nothing but Hamilton's vehement opposition had prevented that party's voting for him *en masse*. He had, also this advantage — the libels which had destroyed his standing

for the time, with his own party, were not only false, but were *known* to be false by the leaders of both sides. The truth was likely to become manifest, and a reaction to set in, which might bear him in triumph over all opposition to more than his former elevation. The spectacle of a man who owes his fortune to his own exertions, contending singly against ancient wealth and powerful families, is one which appeals to the sympathies and to the imagination of Anglo-Saxons. With tact such as his, with friends so devoted, with partisans so warm, with enemies so feebly united that they only awaited his downfall to war with one another, who could say what he might not effect before another presidential election came round?

It is a mistake, too, to suppose that the result of this election rendered Colonel Burr morose and gloomy. Colonel Burr, in all his long life, never knew a gloomy day nor a morose hour. One who applies such epithets to him shows by that fact alone, that he is ignorant of the man's character. His spirits rode as buoyantly and as safely over all disasters as a cork over the cataract of Niagara. There was not in him the stuff out of which gloom is made. He was of Damascus quality; his elasticity was inexhaustible. Cheetham was not very wrong, perhaps, when he said that Burr was *elated* by the result of the election; as it showed him his strength as an independent candidate, and gave him new hopes of being able to form a great democratic, anti-Virginia party.

Would that he could have paused here, and buried in oblivion political aspirations and animosities. A bright career was still before him in the law. Hamilton had won great glory this very spring, by defending at Albany, before the Supreme Court, with unparalleled eloquence, an editor who had been indicted for a libel on the President. His grand object was, by annihilating the maxim, "The greater the truth, the greater the libel," to establish on new and broad foundations the liberty of the press. "After all, came the powerful Hamilton," wrote a correspondent of the *Evening Post*. "No language can convey an adequate idea of the astonishing powers evinced by him. The audience was numerous, and though

composed of those not used to the melting mood, the effect produced on them was electric. * * * As a correct argument for a lawyer, it was very imposing, as a profound commentary upon the science and practice of government, it has never been surpassed." Here was glory; here was triumph. Burr's eminence at the bar was such that, on all cases of commanding interest, he was the man likely to be selected to oppose Hamilton or to aid him.

For any thing that is now *known*, Burr may have meant to confine himself to the peaceful triumphs of the bar. But, alas! the curse of having made a false step in life is, that it *necessitates* worse!

CHAPTER XIX.

THE DUEL.

The General Provocation — The Particular Provocation — The Hostile Correspondence — The Challenge Given and Accepted — Hamilton's Conduct and Burr's Letters before the Meeting — The Banquet of the Cincinnati — The Last Writings of Hamilton and Burr — The Dueling Ground — The Duel — Effect on the Public Mind — The Coroner's Verdict — Dr. Nott's Sermon — The Monument to Hamilton on the Ground.

As habit is second nature, dueling must formerly have seemed a very natural mode of settling personal disputes, for few public men passed through life without being concerned in, at least, one "affair of honor." Gates, De Witt Clinton, Randolph, Benton, Clay, Jackson, Decatur, Arnold, Walpole, Pitt, Wellington, Canning, Peel, Grattan, Fox, Sheridan, Jeffrey, Wilkes, D'Israeli, Lamartine, Thiers, and scores of less famous names, are found in Mr. Sabine's* list of duelists.

In all that curious catalogue, there is not the name of one politician who received provocation so often-repeated, so irritating, and so injurious, as that which Aaron Burr had received from Alexander Hamilton.

Burr was not a man to resent promptly a personal injury, even when what he called his "honor" impelled him to do so. The infidelity of a comrade cut him to the heart; to be doubted by a friend, was, as he once said, "to have the very sanctuary of happiness invaded;" the disapproval of his own set he would have felt acutely. But, to the outcry of the outer world he was comparatively indifferent, and the injurious attempts of enemies he usually disregarded. Aaron Burr, whatever faults he may have had — and he had grievous and radical faults — was *not* a revengeful man; there has seldom lived one who was less so. He had to be much persuaded

* "Notes on Duels and Dueling." By Lorenzo Sabine.

before he would sue Cheetham for libel, and the suit was languidly prosecuted. Cheetham himself, in January of this very year, 1804, had taunted him for allowing Hamilton to speak and write of him as it was then notorious he was in the habit of doing. "Is the Vice-President sunk so low," said this wretched calumniator, "as to submit to be insulted by General Hamilton?"

At every step of Burr's political career, without a single exception, Hamilton, by open efforts, by secret intrigue, or by both, had utterly opposed and forbidden his advancement. He had injured him in the estimation of General Washington. He had prevented Mr. Adams from giving him a military appointment. His letters, for years, had abounded in denunciations of him, as severe and unqualified as the language of a powerful declaimer could convey. From Burr's own table, he had carried away the unguarded sallies of the host for use against the political opponent. The most offensive epithets and phrases he had so habitually applied to Burr, that they had become familiar in the mouths of all the leading Federalists; who, as the reader may have observed, denounced Colonel Burr in Hamilton's own words. And, finally, he had just succeeded in frustrating Burr's keen desire for vindication at the people's hands; and, in doing so, had made it only too evident to all the influential politicians, that for the success of any plans of political advancement which Burr might in future form, it was, above all things else, essential that Hamilton's injurious tongue should be either silenced or bridled.

The two men had already been near collision. I think it was in 1802 that Colonel Burr, having obtained some imperfect knowledge of Hamilton's usual mode of characterizing him, had had a conversation with him on the subject. Hamilton (so said Burr in later years), had explained, apologized, satisfied Burr, and left upon his mind the impression, never effaced, that thenceforth Hamilton was pledged to refrain from speaking of him as he had been accustomed to do. They parted with cordiality, and had ever since been, apparently, very good friends. Burr considered then, and always, that he had made prodigious sacrifices, as a man of honor and a

gentleman, for the sake of avoiding a hostile meeting that could not but injure both as candidates for the public confidence. From the hour Burr learned that Hamilton still used his former freedom, he ceased to respect him; he held him in contempt, as a man insensible to considerations of honor and good faith. Burr's new Federal friends, renegades from the Hamiltonian party, had given him new information respecting the *Burriphobia* under which their former leader labored, and the language in which it was accustomed to find vent.

Consider the force of another circumstance upon a mind like Burr's, whose religion was, fidelity to comrades. Men who proudly looked up to him as more than their political chief — as the preëminent gentleman, and model man of the world, of that age — had fought in his quarrel, and fought with a reckless courage which he had first inspired, and then commanded. If the occasion should arise, could chief decline the encounter with chief, after the subalterns had so gallantly contended? And this consideration had equal weight with Hamilton. Beside having sanctioned the practice of dueling, by serving as second to Colonel Laurens in his duel with General Lee, his own son had fallen, three years ago, in what the language of that day called the vindication of his father's honor. In short, *never*, since the duello was invented, were two men, if the requisite technical provocation should arise, so peculiarly and irresistibly bound to fight, as were Aaron Burr and Alexander Hamilton in the summer of 1804.

During the late election for governor, a letter from Dr. Charles D. Cooper to a friend, found its way into the papers, which contained two sentences relating to Colonel Burr. One was this:

"General Hamilton and Judge Kent have declared, in substance, that they looked upon Mr. Burr to be a dangerous man, and one who ought not to be trusted with the reins of government."

This was the other: "I could detail to you a still more despicable opinion which General Hamilton has expressed of Mr Burr."

Six weeks after the election, the paper containing this letter was put into Colonel Burr's hands, and his attention called to the allusions to himself.

In the afternoon of June 17th, Mr. William P. Van Ness, one of Burr's staunchest friends, the *Aristides* of the pamphlet war of 1802, received a note from Colonel Burr, requesting him to call at Richmond Hill on the following morning. He went. At the request of Burr, he conveyed Dr. Cooper's letter to General Hamilton, with the most offensive passage marked, and a note from Colonel Burr, which, as briefly as possible, called attention to the passage, and concluded with the following words: "You must perceive, sir, the necessity of a prompt and unqualified acknowledgment or denial of the use of any expressions which would warrant the assertions of Mr. Cooper."

Hamilton was taken by surprise. He had not, before that moment, seen Cooper's letter. Having read it, and the note of Colonel Burr, he said that they required consideration, and he would send an answer to Mr. Van Ness's office (Van Ness was a lawyer) in the course of the day. Late that evening he called at Mr. Van Ness's residence, and told him that a press of business had prevented his preparing a reply, and would prevent him for two days to come; but on the 20th he would give him a communication for Colonel Burr.

In that communication, which was very long, Hamilton declined making the acknowledgment or denial that Burr had demanded. Between gentlemen, he said, *despicable* and *more despicable* was not worth the pains of distinction. He could not consent to be interrogated as to the justice of the *inferences* which others might have drawn from what he had said of an opponent during fifteen years' competition. But he stood ready to avow or disavow explicitly any *definite* opinion which he might be charged with having expressed respecting any gentleman. He trusted that Colonel Burr, upon further reflection, would see the matter in the same light. If not, he could only regret the fact, and abide the consequences.

This letter was oil upon the flames of Burr's indignation

His reply was prompt and decided. Hamilton's letters can generally be condensed one half without the loss of an idea, Burr's compact directness defies abbreviation:

"Your letter of the 20th inst.," wrote he, "has been this day received. Having considered it attentively, I regret to find in it nothing of that sincerity and delicacy which you profess to value. Political opposition can never absolve gentlemen from the necessity of a rigid adherence to the laws of honor and the rules of decorum. I neither claim such privilege nor indulge it in others. The common sense of mankind affixes to the epithet adopted by Dr. Cooper the idea of dishonor. It has been publicly applied to me under the sanction of your name. The question is not, whether he has understood the meaning of the word, or has used it according to syntax, and with grammatical accuracy; but, whether you have authorized this application, either directly or by uttering expressions or opinions derogatory to my honor. The time 'when' is in your own knowledge, but no way material to me, as the calumny has now first been disclosed, so as to become the subject of my notice, and as the effect is present and palpable. Your letter has furnished me with new reasons for requiring a definite reply."

Hamilton seems to have read his doom in that letter. He said to Mr. Van Ness, who brought it, that it was such a letter as he had hoped not to receive; it contained several offensive expressions; and seemed to close the door to reply. He had hoped that Mr. Burr would have desired him to state what had fallen from him that might have given rise to the inference of Dr. Cooper. He would have done that frankly, and he believed it would not have been found to exceed justifiable limits. And even then, if Mr. Burr was disposed to give another turn to the discussion, he was willing to consider his last letter undelivered. But if that were not withdrawn, he could make no reply.

Mr. Van Ness detailed these ideas to Colonel Burr, and received from him a paper of instructions to guide him in replying, verbally, to General Hamilton. This paper expresses with force and exactness the view of this affair then

taken, and always adhered to, by Colonel Burr. It read as follows:

"A. Burr, far from conceiving that rivalship authorizes a latitude not otherwise justifiable, always feels greater delicacy in such cases, and would think it meanness to speak of a rival but in terms of respect; to do justice to his merits; to be silent of his foibles. Such has invariably been his conduct toward Jay, Adams, and Hamilton; the only three who can be supposed to have stood in that relation to him.

"That he has too much reason to believe that, in regard to Mr. Hamilton, there has been no reciprocity. For several years his name has been lent to the support of base slanders. He has never had the generosity, the magnanimity, or the candor to contradict or disavow. Burr forbears to particularize, as it could only tend to produce new irritations; but, having made great sacrifices for the sake of harmony; having exercised forbearance until it approached to humiliation, he has seen no effect produced by such conduct but a repetition of injury. He is obliged to conclude that there is, on the part of Mr. Hamilton, a settled and implacable malevolence; that he will never cease, in his conduct toward Mr. Burr, to violate those courtesies of life; and that, hence, he has no alternative but to announce these things to the world; which, consistently with Mr. Burr's ideas of propriety, can be done in no way but that which he has adopted. He is incapable of revenge, still less is he capable of imitating the conduct of Mr. Hamilton, by committing secret depredations on his fame and character. But these things must have an end."

Upon meeting General Hamilton for the purpose of making the above explanation, Mr. Van Ness was informed by him, that he had prepared a written reply to Colonel Burr's last letter, and had left it in the hands of his friend Mr. Pendleton. The verbal explanation was therefore withheld, and General Hamilton's letter conveyed to Colonel Burr. It was as follows: "Your first letter, in a style too peremptory, made a demand, in my opinion, unprecedented and unwarrantable. My answer, pointing out the embarrassment, gave you an opportunity to take a less exceptionable course. You have not

chosen to do it; but by your last letter received this day, containing expressions *indecorous* and improper, you have increased the difficulties to explanation intrinsically incident to the nature of your application. If by a 'definite reply' you mean the direct avowal or disavowal required in your first letter, I have no other answer to give, than that which has already been given. If you mean any thing different, admitting of greater latitude, it is requisite you should explain."

This letter, as might have been expected, produced no effect; as Mr. Van Ness hastened to inform General Hamilton's friend. Van Ness added, that what Colonel Burr demanded was this: a general disavowal of any intention on the part of General Hamilton, in his various conversations, to convey impressions derogatory to the honor of Burr. Pendleton replied, that he believed General Hamilton would have no objection to make such a declaration!

Hamilton, of course, declined making the disavowal. But he gave Van Ness a paper, in his own hand, the purport of which was that if Colonel Burr should think it proper to inquire of General Hamilton the nature of the conversation with Dr. Cooper, General Hamilton would be able to reply, with truth, that it turned wholly on political topics, and did not attribute to Colonel Burr any instance of dishonorable conduct, nor relate to his private character. And in relation to any other conversation which Colonel Burr would specify, a frank avowal or denial would be given.

A "mere evasion," said Burr, when he had read this paper.

Other correspondence followed, but it is too familiar to the public, and too easily accessible, to require repetition here. Throughout the whole of it we see, on the one hand, an exasperated man resolved to bring the affair to a decisive and final issue; on the other, a man striving desperately, but not dishonorably, to escape the consequences of his own too un garded words. Burr's final recapitulation, drawn up for th guidance of his second, was as follows:

"Colonel Burr (in reply to General Hamilton's charge of indefiniteness and inquisition) would only say, that secret whispers traducing his fame, and impeaching his honor, are at least

equally injurious with slanders publicly uttered; that General Hamilton had, at no time, and in no place, a right to use any such injurious expressions; and that the partial negative he is disposed to give, with the reservations he wishes to make, are proofs that he has done the injury specified.

"Colonel Burr's request was, in the first instance, proposed in a form the most simple, in order that General Hamilton might give to the affair that course to which he might be induced by his temper and his knowledge of facts. Colonel Burr trusted with confidence, that, from the frankness of a soldier and the candor of a gentleman, he might expect an ingenuous declaration. That if, as he had reason to believe, General Hamilton had used expressions derogatory to his honor, he would have had the magnanimity to retract them; and that if, from his language, injurious inferences had been improperly drawn, he would have perceived the propriety of correcting errors, which might thus have been widely diffused. With these impressions, Colonel Burr was greatly surprised at receiving a letter which he considered as evasive, and which in manner he deemed not altogether decorous. In one expectation, however, he was not wholly deceived, for the close of General Hamilton's letter contained an intimation that, if Colonel Burr should dislike his refusal to acknowledge or deny, he was ready to meet the consequences. This Colonel Burr deemed a sort of defiance, and would have felt justified in making it the basis of an immediate message. But as the communication contained something concerning the indefiniteness of the request, as he believed it rather the offspring of false pride than of reflection, and as he felt the utmost reluctance to proceed to extremities, while any other hope remained, his request was repeated in terms more explicit. The replies and propositions on the part of General Hamilton have, in Colonel Burr's opinion, been constantly in substance the same.

"Colonel Burr disavows all motives of predetermined hostility, a charge by which he thinks insult added to injury. He feels as a gentleman should feel when his honor is impeached or assailed; and, without sensations of hostility or wishes of

revenge, he is determined to vindicate that honor at such hazard as the nature of the case demands."

The letter concluded with the remark that the length and fruitlessness of the correspondence proved it useless "to offer any proposition, except the simple message which I shall now have the honor to deliver."

The challenge was then given and accepted. Ten days had elapsed since Colonel Burr had first sent for Mr. Van Ness, and it was now the 27th of June. Mr. Pendleton stated that a court was then sitting in which General Hamilton had much business to transact; he would require also a little time to arrange his private affairs; and, therefore, some delay was unavoidable. This was assented to, and the next morning appointed for a meeting of the seconds to confer further on time and place.

At that meeting Mr. Pendleton presented a paper which, he said, he had received from his principal, and which contained some remarks upon the matters in dispute. Van Ness replied that, if the paper contained a specific proposition for an accommodation, he would receive it with pleasure; if not, he must decline doing so, as his principal considered the correspondence completely terminated by the acceptance of the challenge. Pendleton replied that the paper contained no such proposition, but consisted of remarks upon Van Ness's last letter. Mr. Van Ness, therefore, refused to receive it,* and Pendleton retired, promising to call again in a day or two to make the final arrangements. The seconds conferred several times before these were concluded; but, at length, July

* This paper was an earnest endeavor, on the part of General Hamilton, to avoid a hostile meeting. The material passage was as follows: "Mr. Pendleton is authorized to say, that in the course of the present discussion, written or verbal, there has been no intention to evade, defy, or insult, but a sincere disposition to avoid extremities, if it could be done with propriety. With this view General Hamilton has been ready to enter into a frank and free explanation on any and every object of a specific nature; but not to answer a general and abstract inquiry, embracing a period too long for any accurate recollection, and exposing him to unpleasant criticisms from, or unpleasant discussions with, any and every person who may have understood him in an unfavorable sense."

11th, at seven in the morning, was fixed upon as the time; the place, Weehawken; the weapons, pistols; the distance, ten paces. Thus, between the time when Colonel Burr sent for Van Ness and the day appointed for the meeting, twenty-four days elapsed, during the greater part of which the secret was known, certainly, to seven persons, and, probably, to as many as ten.

During this long period, the principals went about their daily business as usual. Hamilton, as was afterward fondly remembered, plead his causes and consulted his clients, with all his wonted vigor, courtesy, and success. Around his table at the "Grange," day after day, he saw his seven children and his tenderly beloved wife, with a ceaseless consciousness of the blow that was suspended over them all. A whisper could have saved him, and saved them, but how impossible it was to utter that whisper!

Burr was residing at cedar-crowned Richmond Hill, and found the great mansion there somewhat lone and chilly. On June 23d (the very day upon which it became certain that the affair with Hamilton could only be terminated by a duel) Theodosia's birth-day came round again, a day on which Richmond Hill, for many a year, had known only the sights and sounds of happiness and mirth. Burr was an observer of fête days and family festivals. On this occasion, he invited a party to dinner, who, as he wrote the next day to Theodosia, "laughed an hour, and danced an hour, and drank her health." He had her picture brought into the dining-room and placed at the table where she was accustomed to sit. But, added he, "as it is a profile, and would not look at us, we hung it up and placed Natalie's (his adopted daughter) at table, which laughs and talks with us." The letter in which these particulars are given is remarkable for containing a suggestion which has since been admirably improved. "Your idea," wrote he, "of dressing up pieces of ancient mythology in the form of amusing tales for children is very good. You *yourself* must write them. Send your performances to me, and, within three weeks after they are received, you shall have them again in print. This will be not only an amusing occupation, but a

very useful one to yourself. It will improve your style and your language, give you habits of accuracy, and add a little to your stock of knowledge. Natalie, too, must work at it, and I'll bet that she makes the best tale. I will be your editor and your critic." The reader is aware how well this 'idea" has since been carried out by Mr. Kingsley and others.

His letters to his daughter, at this period, contain but a single allusion, and that a vague one, to the impending conflict. On the 1st of July, he began a letter with these words:

"Having been shivering with cold all day, though in perfect health, I have now, just at sunset, had a fire in my library, and am sitting near it and enjoying it, if that word be applicable to any thing done in solitude. Some very wise man, however, has exclaimed,

"'Oh! fools, who think it solitude to be alone.'

This is but poetry. Let us therefore drop the subject, lest it lead to another on which I have imposed silence on myself."

The rest of the letter is cheerful enough. He says he is impatient to receive the "Tales," recommends her to subscribe for the *Edinburg Review*, and to be forming a library for her son.

On the Fourth of July, Hamilton and Burr met, for the last time, at the convivial board. It was at the annual banquet of the Society of the Cincinnati, of which Hamilton was president and Burr a member. Hamilton was cheerful, and, at times, merry. He was urged, as the feast wore away, to sing the only song he ever sang or knew, the famous old ballad of *The Drum*. It was thought afterward, that he was more reluctant than usual to comply with the company's request; but after some delay, he said, "Well, you shall have it," and sang it in his best manner, greatly to the delight of the old soldiers by whom he was surrounded. Burr, on the contrary, was reserved, mingled little with the company, and held no intercourse with the president. He was never a fluent man, and was generally, in the society of men, more a listener than a talker. On this occasion, his silence was, therefore, the less

remarked; yet it was remarked. It was observed, too, that he paid no attention to Hamilton's conversation, nor, indeed, looked toward him, until he struck up his song, when Burr turned toward him, and, leaning upon the table, looked at the singer till the song was done.

This difference in the behavior of the two men was doubtless owing partly to their different positions at the banquet. Hamilton, as the master of the feast, was in the eye of every guest, while Burr could easily escape particular observation. The object of both was, of course, to behave so as not to excite inquiry.

On the 9th of July, Hamilton executed his will, leaving his all, after the payment of his debts, to his 'dear and excellent wife.' "Should it happen," said he, "that there is not enough for the payment of my debts, I entreat my dear children, if they, or any of them, should ever be able, to make up the deficiency. I, without hesitation, commit to their delicacy a wish which is dictated by my own. Though conscious that I have too far sacrificed the interests of my family to public avocations, and on this account have the less claim to burden my children, yet I trust in their magnanimity to appreciate as they ought this my request. In so unfavorable an event of things, the support of their dear mother, with the most respectful and tender attention, is a duty, all the sacredness of which they will feel. Probably her own patrimonial resources will preserve her from indigence. But in all situations they are charged to bear in mind, that she has been to them the most devoted and best of mothers."

A few hours more brought them to the day before the one named for the meeting. In the evening, both the principals were engaged, to a late hour, in making their final preparations, and writing what each felt might be his last written words. The paper prepared by Hamilton on that occasion, in the solitude of his library, reveals to us the miserable spectacle of an intelligent and gifted man, who had, with the utmost deliberation, made up his mind to do an action which his intellect condemned as absurd, which his heart felt to be cruel, which his conscience told him was wrong. He said that

he had shrunk from the coming interview. His duty to his religion, his family, and his creditors, forbade it. He should hazard much, and could gain nothing by it. He was conscious of no ill will to Colonel Burr, apart from political opposition, which he hoped had proceeded from pure and upright motives. But there were difficulties, intrinsic and artificial, in the way of an accommodation, which had seemed insuperable; *intrinsic*, because he really *had* been very severe upon Colonel Burr; *artificial*, because Colonel Burr had demanded too much, and in a manner that precluded a peaceful discussion of the difficulty.

"As well," this affecting paper concluded, "because it is possible that I may have injured Colonel Burr, however convinced myself that my opinions and declarations have been well founded, as from my general principles and temper in relation to similar affairs, I have resolved, if our interview is conducted in the usual manner, and it pleases God to give me the opportunity, to reserve and throw away my first fire, and I have thoughts even of reserving my second fire, and thus giving a double opportunity to Colonel Burr to pause and to reflect. It is not, however, my intention to enter into any explanations on the ground. Apology, from principle, I hope, rather than pride, is out of the question. To those who, with me, abhorring the practice of dueling, may think that I ought on no account to have added to the number of bad examples, I answer, that my relative situation, as well in public as in private, enforcing all the considerations which constitute what men of the world denominate honor, imposed on me (as I thought) a peculiar necessity not to decline the call. The ability to be in the future useful, whether in resisting mischief or effecting good, in those crises of our public affairs which seem likely to happen, would probably be inseparable from a conformity with public prejudice in this particular."

Doing evil that good may come, though not the crime it is to do good that evil may come, is a dreadful error. It was the vice of Hamilton's otherwise worthy life. It proved fatal to him at last.

In the long letters which Burr wrote that evening, there

are no signs that the gentle blood of Esther Edwards was revolting in the veins of her erring son against the morrow's deed. There is a tender dignity in his farewell words to Theodosia, but no misgivings. He gives her a number of minute directions about the disposal of his papers, letters, and servants. She was enjoined to burn all such letters as, if by accident made public, would injure any person. This, he added, was more particularly applicable to the letters of his female correspondents. To his step-son, "poor dear Frederic," to Natalie, to various friends, he requested her to give certain tokens of his remembrance. His faithful housekeeper, Peggy, was to have a lot of ground and fifty dollars, and the other servants Theodosia was urged to adopt as her own. His letter concludes with these touching words: "I am indebted to you, my dearest Theodosia, for a very great portion of the happiness which I have enjoyed in this life. You have completely satisfied all that my heart and affections had hoped or even wished. With a little more perseverance, determination, and industry, you will obtain all that my ambition or vanity had fondly imagined. Let your son have occasion to be proud that he had a mother. Adieu. Adieu."

In a postscript, he tells her, upon her arrival in New York, to open her whole heart to his step-son, Frederic, who loves him, he says, almost as much as Theodosia does, and loves Theodosia to adoration. He also gives her a seal of General Washington's, which he possessed, and says she may keep it for her son, or give it to whom she pleases.

He wrote a long letter to her husband, recommending to his regard and care the friends to whom he was most attached. "If it should be my lot to fall," he said, in conclusion, "yet I shall live in you and your son. I commit to you all that is most dear to me — my reputation and my daughter. Your talents and your attachment will be the guardian of the one — your kindness and your generosity of the other. Let me entreat you to stimulate and aid Theodosia in the cultivation of her mind. It is indispensable to her happiness, and essential to yours. It is also of the utmost importance to your son. She would presently acquire a critical knowledge of

Latin, English, and all branches of natural philosophy. All this would be poured into your son. If you should differ with me as to the importance of this measure, suffer me to ask it of you as a last favor. She will richly compensate your trouble."

Two very characteristic postscripts are appended to this letter. In the first, he commends to Mr. Alston's special regard, Frederic Prevost. "Under the garb of coarse rusticity you will find, if you know him, refinement, wit, a delicate sense of propriety, the most inflexible intrepidity, incorruptible integrity, and disinterestedness. I wish you could know him; but it would be difficult, by reason of his diffidence and great reluctance to mingle with the world. It has been a source of extreme regret and mortification to me that he should be lost to society and to his friends. The case seems almost remediless, for, alas! *he is married!*"

The other postscript was as follows: "If you can pardon and indulge a folly, I would suggest that Madame ——, too well known under the name of Leonora, has claims on my recollection. She is now with her husband at St. Jago, of Cuba."

Late at night Colonel Burr threw off his upper garments, lay down upon a couch in his library, and, in a few minutes, was asleep.

At daybreak, next morning, John Swartwout entered the room, and saw his chief still lying on the couch. Well as he knew Colonel Burr, he was astonished, upon approaching him, to discover that he was in a sound and tranquil slumber. He awoke the man who had better never again have opened his eyes upon the light of this world. Van Ness was soon ready. Matthew L. Davis and another friend or two arrived, and the party proceeded in silence to the river, where a boat was in readiness. Burr, Van Ness, Davis, and another embarked, and the boat was rowed over the river toward Weehawken, the scene, in those days, of so many deadly encounters.

Few of the present generation have stood upon the spot, which was formerly one of the places that strangers were sure to visit on coming to the city, and which the events of this

day rendered for ever memorable. Two miles and a half above the city of Hoboken, the heights of Weehawken rise, in the picturesque form so familiar to New Yorkers, to an elevation of a hundred and fifty feet above the Hudson. These heights are rocky, very steep, and covered with small trees and tangled bushes. Under the heights, at a point half a mile from where they begin, there is, twenty feet above the water a grassy ledge or shelf, about six feet wide, and eleven paces long. This was the fatal spot. Except that it is slightly encumbered with underbrush, it is, at this hour, precisely what it was on the 11th of July, 1804. There is an old cedar-tree at the side, a little out of range, which must have looked then very much as it does now. The large rocks which partly hem in the place are, of course, unchanged, except that they are decorated with the initials of former visitors. One large rock, breast-high, narrows the hollow in which Hamilton stood to four feet or less.

Inaccessible to foot-passengers along the river, except at low tide, with no path down to it from the rocky heights above, no residence within sight on that side of the river, unless at a great distance, it is even now a singularly secluded scene. But fifty years ago, when no prophet had yet predicted Hoboken, that romantic shore was a nearly unbroken solitude. A third of a mile below the dueling-ground there stood a little tavern, the occasional resort of excursionists; where, too, dueling parties not unfrequently breakfasted before proceeding to the ground, and where they sometimes returned to invigorate their restored friendship with the landlord's wine. A short distance above the ground, lived a fine-hearted old Captain, who, if he got scent of a duel, would rush to the place, throw himself between the combatants, and never give over persuading and threatening till he had established a peace or a truce between them. He was the owner of the ground, and spoke with authority. He never ceased to think that, if on this fatal morning, he had observed the approach of the boats, he could have prevented the subsequent catastrophe.

But, for the very purpose of preventing suspicion, it had

been arranged that Colonel Burr's boat should arrive some time before the other. About half-past six, Burr and Van Ness landed, and leaving their boat a few yards down the river, ascended over the rocks to the appointed place. It was a warm, bright, July morning. The sun looks down, directly after rising, upon the Weehawken heights, and it was for that reason that the two men removed their coats before the arrival of the other party. There they stood carelessly breaking away the branches of the underwood, and looking out upon as fair, as various, as animated, as beautiful a scene, as mortal eyes in this beautiful world ever behold. The haze-crowned city; the bright, broad, flashing, tranquil river; the long reach of waters, twelve miles or more, down to the Narrows; the vessels at anchor in the harbor; misty, blue Staten Island, swelling up in superb contour from the lower bay; the verdant flowery heights around; the opposite shore of the river, then dark with forest, or bright with sloping lawn; and, to complete the picture, that remarkably picturesque promontory called Castle Point, that bends out far into the stream, a mile below Weehawken, and adds a peculiar beauty to the foreground; — all these combine to form a view, one glance at which *ought* to have sent shame and horror to the duelist's heart, that so much as the thought of closing a human being's eyes for ever on so much loveliness, had ever lived a moment in his bosom.

Hamilton's boat was seen to approach. A few minutes before seven it touched the rocks, and Hamilton and his second ascended. The principals and seconds exchanged the usual salutations, and the seconds proceeded immediately to make the usual preparations. They measured ten full paces; then cast lots for the choice of position, and to decide who should give the word. The lot, in both cases, fell to General Hamilton's second, who chose the *upper* end of the ledge for his principal, which, at that hour of the day, could not have been the best, for the reason that the morning sun, and the flashing of the river, would both interfere with the sight. The pistols were then loaded, and the principals placed, Hamilton looking over the river toward the city, and Burr turned toward the

heights, under which they stood. As Pendleton gave Hamilton his pistol, he asked,

"Will you have the hair-spring set?"

"*Not this time*," was the quiet reply.

Pendleton then explained to both principals the rules which had been agreed upon with regard to the firing; after the word *present*, they were to fire as soon as they pleased. The seconds then withdrew to the usual distance.

"Are you ready," said Pendleton.

Both answered in the affirmative. A moment's pause ensued. The word was given. Burr raised his pistol, took aim, and fired. Hamilton sprang upon his toes with a convulsive movement, reeled a little toward the heights, at which moment he involuntarily discharged his pistol, and then fell forward headlong upon his face, and remained motionless on the ground. His ball rustled among the branches, seven feet above the head of his antagonist, and four feet wide of him. Burr heard it, looked up, and saw where it had severed a twig. Looking at Hamilton, he beheld him falling, and sprang toward him with an expression of pain upon his face. But at the report of the pistols, Dr. Hosack, Mr. Davis, and the boatman, hurried anxiously up the rocks to the scene of the duel; and Van Ness, with presence of mind, seized Burr, shielded him from observation with an umbrella, and urged him down the steep to the boat. It was pushed off immediately, and rowed swiftly back to Richmond Hill, where Swartwout, with feelings that may be imagined, received his unhurt chief — a chief no more!

Mr. Pendleton raised his prostrate friend. Dr. Hosack found him sitting on the grass, supported in the arms of his second, with the ghastliness of death upon his countenance. "This is a mortal wound, doctor," he gasped; and then sunk away into a swoon. The doctor stripped up his clothes, and saw at a glance that the ball, which had entered his right side, must have penetrated a mortal part. Scarcely expecting him to revive, they conveyed him down among the large rocks, to the shore, placed him tenderly in the boat, and set off for the city. The doctor now used the usual restoratives, and the

wounded man gradually revived. "He breathed," to quote the doctor's words; "his eyes, hardly opened, wandered without fixing upon any object; to our great joy, he at length spoke. 'My vision is indistinct,' were his first words. His pulse became more perceptible, his respiration more regular, his sight returned. Soon after recovering his sight, he happened to cast his eye upon the case of pistols, and observing the one that he had had in his hand lying on the outside, he said, 'Take care of that pistol; it is undischarged and still cocked; it may go off and do harm. Pendleton knows' (attempting to turn his head toward him) 'that I did not intend to fire at him.'

"Then he lay tranquil till he saw that the boat was approaching the wharf. He said, 'Let Mrs. Hamilton be immediately sent for; let the event be gradually broke to her, but give her hopes.' Looking up we saw his friend, Mr. Bayard, standing on the wharf in great agitation. He had been told by his servant that General Hamilton, Mr. Pendleton, and myself had crossed the river in a boat together, and too well he conjectured the fatal errand, and foreboded the dreadful result. Perceiving, as we came nearer, that Mr. Pendleton and myself only sat up in the stern sheets, he clasped his hands together in the most violent apprehension; but when I called to him to have a cot prepared, and he at the same moment saw his poor friend lying in the bottom of the boat, he threw up his eyes, and burst into a flood of tears and lamentation. Hamilton alone appeared tranquil and composed. We then conveyed him as tenderly as possible up to the house.* The distress of his amiable family were such that, till the first shock had abated, they were scarcely able to summon fortitude enough to yield sufficient assistance to their dying friend.'"

By nine in the morning the news began to be noised about in the city. A bulletin soon appeared on the board at the Tontine Coffee House, and the pulse of the town stood still at the shocking intelligence. People started and turned pale as they read the brief announcement:

* Hamilton's town residence was 52 Cedar-street; Burr's, 30 Partition-street (now Fulton). Bayard's house, to which Hamilton was taken, was at Greenwich, within half a mile of Richmond Hill.

"GENERAL HAMILTON WAS SHOT BY COLONEL BURR THIS MORNING IN A DUEL. THE GENERAL IS SAID TO BE MORTALLY WOUNDED."

Bulletins, hourly changed, kept the city in agitation. All the circumstances of the catastrophe were told, and retold, and exaggerated at every corner. The thrilling scenes that were passing at the bedside of the dying man — the consultations of the physicians — the arrival of the stricken family — Mrs. Hamilton's overwhelming sorrow — the resignation and calm dignity of the illustrious sufferer — his broken slumbers during the night — the piteous spectacle of the *seven* children entering together the awful apartment — the single look the dying father gave them before he closed his eyes — were all described with amplifications, and produced an impression that can only be imagined. He lingered thirty-one hours. The duel was fought on Wednesday morning. At two o'clock, on Thursday afternoon, Hamilton died.

A notice was immediately posted for a meeting of the merchants, at the Tontine Coffee House, that evening; when they resolved to close their stores on the day of the funeral, to order all the flags of the shipping at half mast, and to wear crape for thirty days. The bar met next morning, and agreed to go into mourning for six weeks. The military companies, the students of Columbia College, the Tammany Society, the Cincinnati, the St. Andrew's Society, the General Society of Mechanics, the Corporation of the city, all passed resolutions of sorrow and condolence, and agreed to attend the funeral. On Saturday, the funeral took place. Business was utterly suspended. The concourse in the streets was unprecedented. The cortége comprised all the magnates of the city, and nearly every body of men that had a corporate existence. The friends and partisans of Colonel Burr made it a point to testify, by their presence in the procession, that they shared in the general respect for the fallen statesman, and in the general sorrow at his untimely end. While the procession was moving, the minute-guns of the artillery in the Park and at the Battery, were answered by minute guns from a British frigate, the British packet, and two French men-of-war that lay at

anchor in the harbor. For two hours, the booming of so many guns deepened the melancholy of the occasion. Governor Morris, on a platform at Trinity Church, pronounced a brief eulogium, which penetrated every heart; for on the same platform stood the four sons of the departed, the eldest sixteen, the youngest, four.

The newspapers, everywhere, broke into declamation upon these sad events. I suppose that the "poems," the "elegies," and the "lines," which they suggested would fill a duodecimo volume of the size usually appropriated to verse. In the chief cities, the character of the deceased was made the subject of formal eulogium. The popular sympathy was recorded indelibly upon the ever-forming map of the United States, which bears the name of Hamilton forty times repeated.

The funeral solemnities over, the public feeling took the character of indignation against the immediate author of all this sorrow and ruin. In a few days the correspondence was published, and from that hour *Burr* became, in the general estimation of the people, a name of horror. Those preliminary letters, read by a person ignorant of the former history of the two men, are entirely damning to the memory of the challenger. They present Burr in the light of a revengeful demon, burning for an innocent victim's blood Read aright — read by one who knows intimately what had gone before — read by one who is able to perceive that the moral quality of a duel is not affected by its results — read, too, in the light of half a century ago — and the challenge will be admitted to be as near an approach to a reasonable and inevitable action, as an action can be which is intrinsically wrong and absurd. But not so thought the half-informed public of 1804. They clamored for a victim. The coroner's jury shared in the feeling which was, for the moment, all but universal, and after ten or twelve days of investigation, brought in a verdict to the effect, that "Aaron Burr, Esquire, Vice-President of the United States, was guilty of the murder of Alexander Hamilton, and that William P. Van Ness, and Nathaniel Pendleton were accessories." Mr. Davis and another gentleman, for refusing to testify, were committed to prison. The grand jury,

a few days after, instructed the district attorney to prosecute. The parties implicated fled, in amazement, rather than terror, from these unexampled proceedings.

Need it be told that Cheetham rose with the occasion, and surpassed himself? The fables he invented during the month following the duel have not been excelled since the love of scandal was implanted in the heart of man. Three of Burr's myrmidons, he said, had sat day and night, ransacking newspapers for the grounds of a challenge, and had borne Dr. Cooper's letter to their chief, exulting! Burr, he continued, had learned from a paragraph in the *Chronicle*, published ten days before the duel, that a girl in England, who had been shot in the breast, had escaped unharmed from the bullet's striking upon a silk handkerchief. Whereupon, says Cheetham, the valorous colonel orders a suit of silk clothes to fight in, and went to the field in an impenetrable panoply of silk. No, replied the *Chronicle*, his coat was of bombazine, and his pantaloons of cotton. Cheetham then called upon "the ingenious and philosophical Peter Irving," to favor the public with a disquisition upon the nature of bombazine, and, meanwhile, informs them that its woof is of silk, and its warp of mohair. A discussion on the fabric of the waistcoast runs through a few numbers of each paper. Cheetham further averred that while Hamilton lay dying, surrounded by his agonized family, Burr sat at table with his myrmidons drinking wine, and jocularly apologizing to them for not having shot his antagonist through the heart. Another of his inventions was, that Colonel Burr had, for three months, been at daily practice with the pistol, and had passed the morning of the 4th of July, before going to the banquet of the Cincinnati, in shooting at a mark in the grounds of Richmond Hill. The truth was, that Colonel Burr was inexpert with the pistol from *want* of practice. He was a fair shot, because he was fearless and self-possessed. A great shot he never was.

Such vitality may there be in lies planted at the right moment in the right place, and in the right manner, that these foolish tales have still a certain currency in the United States Many old Federalists and Clintonians believe them, and think

it ignorance in one who does not. A poem, designed for Hamilton's monument, written a few months after the duel, speaks

> "Of persecuted greatness, that provoked
> The *practiced aim of Infamy.*"

All but the most devoted friends of Burr were overawed by the storm of popular indignation thus shamelessly stimulated. For two weeks, even the *Chronicle* was nearly silent. Then a short series of articles appeared palliating and excusing Burr's conduct. A pamphlet, signed "Lysander," was published in August, with the same object. There was a slight reaction, after the first month; and, gradually, a considerable number of the extreme Republicans came to regard with a certain complacency the man who had removed the great Federalist from the political field. In the Far West, and in some parts of the South, Burr gained a positive increase of popularity by the duel. But in the States where his chief strength had lain, and from which he may have hoped for future support against the Virginians, he sunk to a deeper deep of unpopularity than any American citizen has reached since Benedict Arnold's treason amazed the struggling nation.

This duel had the good effect of rousing the public mind of the free States to a sense of the execrableness of the practice of dueling. General C. C. Pinckney, Vice-President of the Cincinnati, proposed to the New York division, that the society should thenceforth set their faces resolutely against the practice. The legislature was memorialized for more stringent laws upon the subject, and the clergy were besought to denounce the murderous custom from the pulpit. A large number of them did so, among whom was Samuel Spring, of Newburyport, Burr's college friend, and fellow-adventurer at Quebec. Dr. Nott, then pastor of a Presbyterian church in Albany, now the venerable President of Union College, made the fall of Hamilton the subject of a sermon, which is still justly celebrated. As the strongest expression of feeling which the event elicited, I append here its concluding passages:

"*Guilty, absurd, and rash*, as dueling is, it has its advocates. And had it not had its advocates — had not a strange preponderance of opinion been in favor of it, never, O lamentable *Hamilton!* hadst thou thus fallen, in the midst of thy days, and before thou hadst reached the zenith of thy glory!

"O that I possessed the talent of eulogy, and that I might be permitted to indulge the tenderness of friendship in paying the last tribute to his memory! O that I were capable of placing this great man before you! Could I do this, I should furnish you with an argument, the most practical, the most plain, the most convincing, except that drawn from the mandate of God, that was ever furnished against dueling, that horrid practice, which has in an awful moment robbed the world of such exalted worth. * * *

"I know he had his failings. I see on the picture of his life, a picture rendered awful by greatness, and luminous by virtue, some dark shades. On these let the tear that pities human weakness fall; on these let the vail which covers human frailty rest. As a hero, as a statesman, as a patriot, he lived nobly: and would to God I could add, he nobly fell.

"Unwilling to admit his error in this respect, I go back to the period of discussion. I see him resisting the threatened interview. I imagine myself present in his chamber. Various reasons, for a time, seem to hold his determination in arrest. Various and moving objects pass before him, and speak a dissuasive language.

"His country, which may need his counsels to guide, and his arm to defend, utters her *veto*. The partner of his youth, already covered with weeds, and whose tears flow down into her bosom, intercedes! His babes, stretching out their little hands and pointing to a weeping mother, with lisping eloquence, but eloquence which reaches a parent's heart, cry out, 'Stay, stay, dear papa, and live for us!' In the mean time the specter of a fallen son, pale and ghastly, approaches, opens his bleeding bosom, and, as the harbinger of death, points to the yawning tomb, and warns a hesitating father of the issue.

"He pauses. Reviews these sad objects: and reasons on

the subject. I admire his magnanimity. I approve his reasoning, and I wait to hear him reject with indignation the murderous proposition, and to see him spurn from his presence the presumptuous bearer of it.

"But I wait in vain. It was a moment in which his great wisdom forsook him. A moment in which *Hamilton* was not himself.

"He yielded to the force of an imperious custom, and, yielding, he sacrificed a life in which all had an interest; — and he is lost — lost to his family — lost to us.

"For this act, because he disclaimed it, and was penitent, I forgive him. But there are those whom I can not forgive.

"I mean not his antagonist, over whose erring steps, if there be tears in heaven, a pious mother looks down and weeps. If he is capable of feeling, he suffers already all that humanity can suffer: suffers, and, wherever he may fly, will suffer, with the poignant recollection of having taken the life of one who was too magnanimous in return to attempt his own. Had he but known this, it must have paralyzed his arm while it pointed at so incorruptible a bosom the instrument of death. Does he know this now? his heart, if it be not adamant, must soften; if it be not ice, it must melt.—— But on this article I forbear. Stained with blood as he is, if he be penitent I forgive him; and if he be not, before these altars, where all of us appear as suppliants, I wish not to excite your vengeance, but rather, in behalf of an object rendered wretched and pitiable by crime, to wake your prayers.

* * * * * *

"Ah! ye tragic shores of Hoboken, crimsoned with the richest blood, I tremble at the crimes you record against us, the annual register of murders which you keep and send up to God! Place of inhuman cruelty! beyond the limits of reason, of duty, and of religion, where man assumes a more barbarous nature, and ceases to be man. What poignant, lingering sorrows do thy lawless combats occasion to surviving relatives!

"Ye who have hearts of pity, ye who have experienced the anguish of dissolving friendship, who have wept, and still

weep, over the moldering ruins of departed kindred, ye can enter into this reflection."

Not in vain did these words ring out with such emphasis from that Albany pulpit. The sermon was widely circulated and reached the national conscience. Since that day, no man, in the civilized States of this Union, has fought a duel without falling in the esteem of his countrymen. The custom is now abolished in those States, never to be revived.

A few months after the duel, the St. Andrew's Society of New York erected upon the spot where Hamilton, their president, fell, a marble monument, and surrounded it with an iron railing. For many years, while the monument stood, the place was visited by thousands of people in the course of every summer. It was never known by what irreverent hands the railing was first broken down, and the whole structure gradually removed; but, for thirty years past, no trace of the monument has existed on the ground which it commemorated. The slab which bore the inscription was preserved, until very recently, in an out-house of the mansion where resides the historical family who are proprietors of the spot. But, upon searching for it, two years ago, the steward of the estate discovered that even that last relic had disappeared in the same mysterious manner as the rest. At present there is not so much as a path leading to the scene of the duel, and no one can find it, among those tangled and precipitous heights, without a guide.

APPENDIX—1864.

I.

YOUNG BURR AMONG THE GIRLS IN CONNECTICUT.

Among the family papers of a descendant of Jonathan Edwards there has been discovered, since the publication of this book, a letter, in the form of a diary, written by Aaron Burr to his sister when, at the age of eighteen, he was residing in the family of Dr. Bellamy, at Bethlehem, Connecticut. Every sentence of it shows a characteristic touch. The reader will observe that Burr quotes the line:

"O! fools, who think it solitude to be alone."

In a letter, written to his daughter thirty years after, in view of the approaching duel with Hamilton, he employs the same quotation. See page 348. In 1804 he seems to have forgotten the name of the poet, whom he styled "some very wise man." When the following letter was written, Hamilton, a student of Columbia College in New York, seventeen years of age, was writing those essays upon the rights of the American Colonies, which laid the foundation of his fortunes. Burr and his young friends were equally agitated on the great subject—little as it would be inferred from this curious epistle:

AARON BURR TO HIS SISTER.

Bethlehem, January 17, 1774,
Monday, P. M., 10 o'clock.

Dear Sister: I arrived here without anything remarkable hap'ning to me, which is very extraordinary—however, the Fates never decreed that I should go any where, but some one

should be the worse for it—as you well know by sad experience.

Riding soberly along, we overtook a young Gentleman and Lady on one Horse. Our appearance entirely engrossed their attention; their Horse stumbled when they were least aware of it, and they both fell off—most unfortunately there hap'ned to be by the side of the Path a very deep gulley, filled up with snow; here fell the unhappy Victims! The young Gentleman had the good Fortune to light on his feet—not so the unhappy Nymph! for falling backwards she was unable to help herself—her head struck first, and she sunk in, up to her waist! *O! miserabile Visu!*

When the little Spark saw his Mistress in this doleful Plight, awed by her appearance, he at first hesitated whether he should approach her; but at length (with due deference to her situation) seized her by one foot, and after many a Sturdy Lugg, surpassing his pygmy size, disengaged her from her Downy Bed.

When I first entered this House, "Hey! (says Jones) what sent you here already." "Is Miss D. at Litchfield"—(says Mrs. Bellamy,) no (replied I) she went away last Fryday. "Now the Mystery is unravelled, well we did not expect you here again this Winter." Then in comes the Old Doctor, and between him, Mrs. Bellamy, Sam Jones and Betsey, I was mauled most thoroughly for nearly an hour, and so constant and clamorous were they, that had it been for my life, I could not have had one syllable in the conversation. "Ay, Silence gives consent—Silence gives consent," was the universal cry. "A guilty Conscience needs no accuser"—"See how he blushes!" What could I do? My tongue was of so little use that I seized it several Times, and had serious Thoughts of biting it off, and I often wished I had not a drop of Blood in my Body, unless I could keep it in better Regulation.

When supper came you'll see how I fared. You know I was up the greatest Part of last Night writing letters, and I ate so enormously at Supper and Breakfast that I had an extreme Pain in my stomach and was very drowsy. "Ah! he's far gone—has no appetite—do mind that sober Fiz!" I told

them I had a Pain in my Breast. "Ay, the Heart-Ache I suppose he means. La! how pale the child looks— how poor he's grown! I imagine he had better go to Bed. I suppose he has slept none this Fortnight." This last stroke I did not at first comprehend, but I find they have no Idea of Courtship but as a work of Darkness. Whence all this came I shall be better able to tell to-morrow.

Tuesday, 9 o'clock A. M.—David Bellamy, last Night from N. Haven, saw Mr. Edwards, and informs me that he and his company rode but 3 miles the night they started from Litchfield. The same Person says they have as much snow in New Haven as here. Since this is the case you may look out for Fairfield Folks, if they have common sense and any desire to see you. But should they come either from F. F. or Stockbridge, I shall expect immediate notice.

Two o'clock, P. M.—I was just now called down to Dinner, when to my surprise I found the House full of Ministers; however, I sat down; and the old Doctor began: "Why, Mr. Burr, you've lost your appetite." "Doctor," (cries the old woman,) "it is not fair to run your Riggs on Mr. Burr, before all these strangers; you'll make him blush; if he is in love, he can't help it." I could have bit her Head off for her Kindness, with a great Deal of Pleasure. Nevertheless, this was but a modest Preface to what followed. Some proposed different cures for love; others would tell infallible signs of it, which they took good care should be all found in me. In short, I was the sum and substance of the conversation of this large Reverend Assembly all Dinner Time, which seemed to me a little Eternity. At length the old woman (to sum up every odious character that ever disgraced humanity) told me I was in the right of it to marry a rich wife if I could get one, and added she wished her sons would follow my example. Every grain of spirit in me that had not been melted down by the *universal softener* kindled afresh at this injurious charge, and really I blackguarded the old woman with all the skill I was Master of. They are excessively cautious to conceal from me the Author of these Reports, but I shall be as studious to discover it.

Wednesday, 1 o'clock—A Beautiful Day.—Between 12 and 1 last night, as I was (according to custom) anticipating the most perfect Happiness a few years more could possibly produce; when no dark cloud appeared to obscure the pleasing Prospect; when I sincerely exclaimed, with your admired Poet—

"O! fools, who think it solitude to be alone."

—in this sweet, transporting, though delusive moment, Jones gave a yell, the most shrill and doleful that ever was uttered, followed by a groan more distressing than I ever imagined could proceed from any one, tho' in the extremest Agonies of an expiring Moment. I expected no other than to find him cold; however, I ventured to shake him, he awoke in perfect Health, and told me the cause of his distress was the following:

He imagined himself preaching to a numerous audience, in the front of a very high Gallery. As it was Midsummer he felt very drowsy, and after repeatedly nodding went into a sound sleep and fell forward over the Gallery, catching only by his Toes, and in this melancholy situation was he, under a lively sense of his heinous crime, viewing himself on the Borders of Eternity, when I waked him; but the Doctor roars for me to Dinner.

P. M., 2 o'clock.—I have just been over to the Tavern to buy candles; there I saw six slay-loads of Bucks & Bells, from Woodberry, and a happier company I believe there never was; it really did me good to look at them. They were drinking Cherry Rum when I entered the room, and I easily perceived that both Males and Females had enough to keep them in Spirits. The Females especially looked too immensely good-natured to say *no* to anything. And I doubt not the Effects of this Frolic will be very visible a few Months hence.

Thursday, 11 o'clock, A. M.—I have at length found out the Author of these Reports about me, tho' there was vast Pains taken to conceal it from ——. My uncommon respect for the fair sex prevented me from having the least suspicion of any one of them. However, much to my surprise, I find

that even among them some are imperfect. Sam went lately to spend an evening (or rather a night) with a certain Miss L. Marsh, at the Farms. She, among many other things, told Sam that Mr. Burr gallanted Miss D— about town every day, and sat up with her every other night; tho' I had never the pleasure of seeing the above-mentioned lady, I really admire her invention.

To-day several families in this place have sent for Mr. Marshall (the Episcopalian minister in Woodberry) to have a general christening, for they despair of ever having this office performed by Dr. Bellamy, as they are none of the most scrupulous sort of folks—'tis very probable this will be the means of raising a church-party in this place.

P. M., 10 o'clock.—I have just found an opportunity to send you this scrawl—you will find it a curious pack of trumpery. But keep it to yourself as you ever expect another line from your

Very affectionate
BROTHER BURR.

The bearer will wait upon you for your commands to-morrow.

II.

ONE OF AARON BURR'S COLLEGE COMPOSITIONS.

The Passions.

"AMID the variety of literary pieces which have in all ages been ushered into the world, few, if any, afford greater satisfaction than those that treat of man. To persons of a speculative nature and elegant taste, whose bosoms glow with benevolence, such disquisitions are peculiarly delightful. The

reason, indeed, is obvious; for what more necessary to be learned and accurately understood? and, therefore, what more proper to engage the attention? Well may I say, with our ethic poet,

"The proper study of mankind is man."

"If we take a view of the body only, which may be called the shell or external crust, we shall perceive it to be formed with amazing nicety and art. How are we lost in wonder when we behold all its component parts; when we behold them, although various and minute, and blended together almost beyond conception, discharging their peculiar functions without the least confusion. All harmoniously conspiring to one grand end.

"But when we take a survey of the more sublime parts of the human frame; when we behold man's internal make and structure; his mental faculties; his social propensities, and those active powers which set all in motion—the passions,—what an illustrious display of consummate wisdom is presented to our admiring view! What brighter mark—what stronger evidence need we of a God? The scanty limits of a few minutes, to which I am confined, would not permit me, were I equal to the task, to enter into a particular examination of all man's internal powers. I shall therefore throw out a few thoughts on the passions only.

"Man's mental powers, being in their nature sluggish and inactive, cannot put themselves in motion. The grand design then of the passions is to rouse them to action. These lively and vigorous principles make us eager in the pursuit of those things that are approved by the judgment; keep the mind intent upon proper objects, and at once awake to action all the powers of the soul. The passions give vivacity to all our operations, and render the enjoyments of life pleasing and agreeable. Without them, the scenes of the world would affect us no more than the shadowy pictures of a morning dream.

"Who can view the works of nature, and the productions

of art, without the most sublime and rapturous emotions? Who can view the miseries of others, without being dissolved into compassion? Who can read human nature, as represented in the histories of the world, without burning to chastise the perpetrators of tyranny, or glowing to imitate the assertors of freedom? But, were we of a sudden stripped of our passions, we should survey the works of nature and the productions of art with indifference and neglect. We should be unaffected with the calamities of others, deaf to the calls of pity, and dead to all the feelings of humanity. Without generosity, benevolence, or charity, man would be a grovelling, despicable creature. Without the passions, man would hardly rank above the beasts.

"It is a trite truth, that the passions have too much influence over our sentiments and opinions. It is the remark of a late author, that the actions and sentiments of men do as naturally follow the lead of the passions, as the effect does the cause. Hence they are, by some, aptly enough, termed the principles of action. Vicious desires will produce vicious practices; and men, by permitting themselves to think of indulging irregular passions, corrupt the understanding, which is the source of all virtue and morality. The passions, then, if properly regulated, are the gentle gales which keep life from stagnating; but, if let loose, the tempests which tear every thing before them. Too fatal observation will evince the truth of this.

"Do we not frequently behold men of the most sprightly genius, by giving the reins to their passions, lost to society, and reduced to the lowest ebb of misery and despair? Do we not frequently behold persons of the most penetrating discernment and happy turn for polite literature, by mingling with the sons of sensuality and riot, blasted in the bloom of life? Such was the fate of the late celebrated Duke of Wharton, Wilmot, earl of Rochester, and Villers, duke of Buckingham, three noblemen, as eminently distinguished by their wit, taste, and knowledge, as for their extravagance, revelry, and lawless passions. In such cases, the most charming elocution, the finest fancy, the brightest blaze of genius,

and the noblest burst of thoughts, call for louder vengeance and damn them to lasting infamy and shame.

"A greater curse cannot, indeed, befall community, than for princes and men in eminent departments to be under the influence of ill-directed passions. Lo, Alexander and Cæsar, the fabled heroes of antiquity, to what lengths did passion hurry them? Ambition, with look sublime, bade them on, bade them grasp at universal dominion, and wade to empire through seas of blood! But why need I confine myself to these? Do not provinces, plundered and laid waste with fire and sword; do not nations, massacred and slaughtered by the bloody hand of war; do not all these dreadful and astonishing revolutions, recorded in the pages of history, show the fatal effects of lawless passions?

"If the happiness of others could not, yet surely our own happiness should induce us to keep our passions within the bounds of reason; for the passions, when unduly elevated, destroy the health, impair the mental faculties, sour the disposition, imbitter life, and make us equally disagreeable to others and uneasy to ourselves. Is it not, then, of moment, that our passions be duly balanced, their sallies confined within proper limits, and in no case suffered to transgress the bounds of reason? Will any one deny the importance of regulating the passions, when he considers how powerful they are, and that his own happiness, and perhaps the happiness of thousands, depends upon it? The regulation of the passions is a matter of moment, and therefore we should be careful to fix them upon right objects, to confine them within proper bounds, and never permit them to exceed the limits assigned by nature. It is the part of reason to soothe the passions, and to keep the soul in a pleasing serenity and calm: if reason rules, all is quiet, composed, and benign: if reason rules, all the passions, like a musical concert, are in unison. In short, our passions, when moderate, are accompanied with a sense of fitness and rectitude; but, when excessive, inflame the mind, and hurry us on to action without due distinction of objects.

"Among uncivilized nations, the passions do, in general,

exceed all rational bounds. Need we a proof of this? Let us cast our eyes on the different savage tribes in the world, and we shall be immediately convinced that the passions rule without control. Happy it is, that in polished society, the passions, by early discipline, are so moderated as to be made subservient to the most important services. In this respect, seminaries of learning are of the utmost advantage, and attended with the most happy effects. Moreover, the passions are attended with correspondent commotions in animal nature, and therefore, the real temper will, of course, be discovered by the countenance, the gesture, and the voice. Here I might run into a pleasing enumeration of many instances of this; but, fearing that I have already trespassed upon your patience, shall desist. Permit me, however unusual, to close with a wish. May none of those unruly passions ever captivate any of my audience."

III.

BURR AND CHESTERFIELD.

Allusion is made (p. 63) to the influence of Lord Chesterfield upon the forming character of Aaron Burr. It is a curious fact that the letters of Chesterfield to his son, which were published in England in 1774, were re-published in Boston in 1779, in the midst of the Revolutionary War. They appeared in two duodecimo volumes, price five dollars. This was, probably, the most costly work published in America during the war; most of the other announcements in the newspapers being pamphlets and sermons.

IV.

THE BODY OF GENERAL MONTGOMERY.

The story of Aaron Burr's bearing off the body of General Montgomery at Quebec (see page 76) having been called in question, I place here the chief evidence on which the statement rests. That Burr himself was accustomed to tell the story is known to many persons still living. Mr. M. L. Davis informs us that Col. Burr was unwilling to have it told in his memoirs unless testimony corroborative of his own assertion could be obtained. Consequently, the anecdote did not appear in that work. After its publication, however, Mr. Davis obtained from Dr. Gardner Spring, the eminent clergyman and theologian of this city, a statement which places the truth of the story beyond doubt. Besides confirming Col. Burr's claim to the honor in question, Dr. Spring's letter has the additional value of showing us upon what ground an eminent clergyman and theologian, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-eight, could advise his father to shun an old friend, classmate, and comrade: namely, *his having lost caste!*

REV. GARDNER SPRING TO M. L. DAVIS.

New York, Brick-church Chapel, October 23, 1838.

G. Spring's compliments to Mr. Davis, with a hasty reply to his note of yesterday.

The facts in relation to my venerable father's interview with Colonel Burr are just as I stated them to you at Saratoga. The last visit my father made me, he expressed a great anxiety to see Colonel Burr. I objected, and told him Burr had lost caste, and it was reputable neither to him nor myself to call on him.

For two or three days he relinquished the design of making

the call. But on an afternoon, just before he left us, he said to me, "My son, I must see Burr before I leave the city. I went through the woods with him under Arnold. I stood by his side on the Plains of Abram, and I have not seen him since the morning on which Montgomery fell. It was a heavy snow-storm. Montgomery had fallen. The British troops were advancing towards the dead body; and little Burr was hastening from the fire of the enemy, up to his knees in snow, with Montgomery's body on his shoulders! Do you wonder I wish to see him?"

I conducted my father to Col. Burr's office, and we subsequently spent part of an evening together at my house in Beekman street. My father was a volunteer chaplain under Arnold, and, being friends at college, he and Burr were much together during that fearful campaign.

G. Spring.

The Rev. Dr. Van Pelt informed me that Burr, on his death-bed, said that he was close to General Montgomery when he fell, and declared that if he had been in command, he would have gone on and taken Quebec.

V.

ARNOLD'S EXPEDITION TO QUEBEC IN 1775.

We have some further light upon this perilous and romantic expedition in the diary of a private, named James Melwin, which has been published for private circulation by a club of this city. The most interesting passages of this diary are the following:

CAMBRIDGE, SEPTEMBER 13, 1775.

This day being Wednesday, marched from Cambridge, in Capt. Dearborn's* company, destined for Quebec, and were to embark at Newburyport for Kennebec river. We lodged in Medford.

Sept. 14. Received one month's pay, and marched to Lynn; lodged at Porter's tavern.

Sept. 16. Marched to Newburyport; the company were quartered in a rope-walk.

Sept. 17. Sunday—the detachment went to meeting.

Sept. 18. P. M.—Embarked on board a schooner of seventy-five tons; the whole were embarked in eleven vessels.

Sept. 19. About 10 o'clock sailed out of the harbor, and stood on and off, waiting for one of the vessels which got aground, and not getting off, the men were put on board the other vessels, and we sailed in the afternoon, with a fair wind and pleasant weather; at night it grew thick and foggy, with rain, thunder, and lightning, and blowed fresh.

Sept. 20. In the morning, foggy and wet; lay to part of the night; at daybreak two of our fleet were in sight, and we made sail and stood in for the shore. Blowed fresh—we made Seguin.

Sept. 23. Arrived at Fort Western. One James McCormick shot Sergeant Bishop.

Sept. 25. McCormick was found guilty.

Sept. 26. He was brought to the gallows and reprieved.

Sept. 27. Got our provisions into batteaux, and went about four miles.

Sept. 28. Proceeded up the river and found the water shoal, which caused a rapid current, and we were obliged often to get out and wade, pulling the boat after us.

Sept. 30. Arrived at Fort Halifax, where was the first carrying place; the land here is better than that near the sea. We carried over our batteaux and provisions; the carrying place is opposite the fort.

* Afterward Major-General and Secretary of War.

OCTOBER, 1775.

Oct'r 4. Went up to Bumazees Ripples, and came to Norrigewalk. The carriage-place is about a mile in length. We had oxen to haul over our provision. Our batteaux were caulked. We were now to take our leave of houses and settlements, of which we saw no more, except one Indian wigwam, till we came among the French, in Canada.

Oct'r 9. Arrived at the great carrying-place, where was a log house built for the sick.

Oct'r 10. Mr. Spring,* our chaplain, went to prayers; we went to the first pond, four miles from the river; it blowed hard, and one of the men was killed by the falling of a tree.

Oct'r 11. Crossed the first pond about three-quarters of a mile over; here is plenty of fine trout.

Oct'r 12. There was a log house built on the first carrying-place, between the first and second ponds.

Oct'r 13. Crossed the carrying-place from this pond to another; the carrying-place is about one mile over.

Oct'r 14. Crossed the pond about half a mile over, and got over the carrying-place about one and a half mile in length; the woods are cedar and hemlock.

Oct'r 16. Crossed the third pond, about one and a half miles over. We got over the fourth carrying-place, four and a half miles in length; part of the way over a boggy swamp, overgrown with white moss and bushes, which seemed half withered; found it difficult getting over our batteaux and barrels, sinking knee deep in moss and mud. We launched our batteaux into a small creek which enters the Dead river.

Oct'r 17. Went eighteen miles up the Dead river.

Oct'r 18. Overtook Col. Green† and his party about twenty-five miles up Dead river; had orders to put ourselves in a defensive condition.

Oct'r 19. Had orders to march, and went about five miles.

* Father of the Rev. Gardner Spring, D. D., Pastor of the Brick Church.

† The hero of Red Bank, who, with his command, were afterward surprised and murdered by a party of Refugees, near Pine's Bridge, Westchester county, May 13, 1784.

Oct'r 20. Rained all last night and this day.

Oct'r 21. Marched through hideous woods and mountains for the most part, but sometimes on the banks of the river, which is very rapid.

Oct'r 23. Captain Handshill and sixty men went forward with ten days' provision; about forty sick and weak men went back with only two or three days' provision. The river here is narrow and excessive rapid.

Oct'r 27. Crossed the second carrying-place, three-quarters of a mile, then crossed second pond, then third carrying-place and third pond, then fourth carrying-place and fourth pond, and encamped.

Oct'r 28. Came down Chadeur river in a birch canoe, and went to fetch back a batteau to carry the men across a river, but could not overtake them. The company were ten miles, wading knee deep among alders, &c., the greatest part of the way, and came to a river which had overflown the land. We stopped some time not knowing what to do, and at last were obliged to wade through it, the ground giving way under us at every step. We got on a little knoll of land and went ten miles, where we were obliged to stay, night coming on, and we were all cold and wet; one man fainted in the water with fatigue and cold, but was helped along. We had to wade into the water and chop down trees, fetch the wood out of the water after dark to make a fire to dry ourselves; however, at last we got a fire, and after eating a mouthful of pork, laid ourselves down to sleep round the fire, the water surrounding us close to our heads; if it had rained hard it would have overflown the place we were in. Capt. Goodrich's company had only three-quarters of a pound of pork, each man, and a barrel of flour among the whole. They ordered the batteau to proceed down the river with the flour, and when they came to the place above-mentioned, waded through. They came to the knoll of land before mentioned, and made a fire to dry themselves, being almost perished. After some time they marched, and found the difficulty increasing, being informed they must return the way they came; being night, they camped on the dryest spot they could find.

Oct'r 29. Being Sunday; crossed a river after much fatigue and loss of time, in a birch canoe, and then waded to another river, about forty rods from the first, which we crossed last night. I lay at a bark house, and this morning went in the canoe to ferry over the people over the two rivers above mentioned, leaving my provision behind, as did Captain Dearborn and the three other officers. After we got over these rivers, Captain Dearborn, steering by a bad compass, went wrong about two miles, the company following, and we went back again, then went two or three miles to a little bark house, where I had left my provision, and on coming there found that our provision was stolen by Captain Morgan's* company. Goodrich's company came to the lower end of Chadeur pond expecting to find their batteau with the flour, but were disappointed.

Oct'r 30. I set out in a birch bark canoe with Captain Dearborn and Captain Ayres. We proceeded to the lower end of the pond, where Captain Dearborn left the canoe, and Captain Ayres and I proceeded down Chadeur river, about three miles, and came to a riply place, which was very dangerous, the rocks standing up all over the river. Here a batteau was stove, with four men, and one man drowned, named George Innis. I got safe down this place, and from bad to worse; proceeded till night, and encamped with the company. Goodrich's company set out early, though on empty stomachs, and marched about ten miles in hopes to overtake their batteau with the flour, but coming to a small creek, they found an advertisement set up, informing them that their batteau was stove and the flour lost, and the men with difficulty having saved their lives. This was melancholy news to them, having eaten scarcely anything for several days, and having waded through ice and water, and were a great way from any inhabitants, and knew not how far it was. They agreed to part, and the heartiest to push forward as fast as they could.

Oct'r 31. This day I took my pack and went by land, all

* The hero of the "Cowpens."

the way, to inhabitants. I was not well, having the flux. We went twenty-one miles. Goodrich's company marched three miles and were overtaken by Captain Smith, who informed them that Captain Goodrich had left two quarters of a dog for them. They stopped and sent for the meat, but the men returned without finding it; however, some of them killed another dog* which belonged to us, which probably saved some of their lives. Captain Ward's company killed another dog.

November, 1775.

Nov'r 1. Continued unwell; this day I eat the last of my provision; I kept with the company, and we went twenty miles.

Nov'r 2. Traveled four miles; I shot a small bird called a sedee, and a squirrel, which I lived upon this day. About noon we met some Frenchmen with cattle for our army, and some meal in a canoe. I had a small piece of meat and bread given me; yesterday my messmates gave away victuals to strangers but refused me, though they knew I had mine stolen from me. This evening, to our great joy, we arrived at the first French house, where was provisions ready for us. The first victuals I got was some boiled rice, which I bought of the Indians, giving one shilling and four pence for about a pint and a half. Here we were joined by about seventy or eighty Indians, all finely ornamented in their way with broaches, bracelets, and other trinkets, and their faces painted. I had gone barefoot these two or three days, and wore my feet sore.

Nov'r 5. Sunday—marched about twelve miles. Our Colonel went forward and got beef killed for us every ten or twelve miles, and served us potatoes instead of bread. I stood

* This dog belonged to Captain Dearborn, and was a great favorite. "My dog was very large and a great favorite. I gave him up to several of Captain Goodrich's company. They carried him to their company, and killed and divided him among those who were suffering most severely with hunger. They ate every part of him, not excepting his entrails."—*Letter of Gen. Dearborn to the Rev. William Allen.*

sentry over one Flood, who was whipped for stealing Captain Dearborn's pocket book. This was at St. Mary's.

Nov'r 6. Marched twenty miles; very bad traveling, as it was all the way to Quebec. Twelve miles was through woods, in the night, mid leg in mud and snow. I traveled the whole day without eating, and could not get any house to lay in, but lodged in a barn all night.

Nov'r 7. Marched fifteen miles; snowed all day. My money being gone I could get nothing to eat till night, when there was an ox killed.

Nov'r 8. Marched six miles and came to Point Levi, on the river St. Lawrence, opposite Quebec.

Nov'r 9. Our people took a prisoner, who was a midshipman.* Continued at Point Levi; kept guard along the river side, making scaling ladders and collecting canoes to cross the river; the enemy having broken all the boats they could find.

Nov'r 13. In the evening crossed St. Lawrence at the mill above Point Levi, and landed at Wolfe's cove. I went back twice to fetch over the people, and stayed till day. The town was alarmed by our Colonel firing at a boat on the river. We went to Major Caldwell's house, about two miles from the city, where we were quartered; a whole company having only one small room.

Nov'r 14. One of our sentries was taken by the enemy, which alarmed us; we expected they were come to give us battle, and the whole detachment marched within musket

* "The boat soon struck the bank, and a midshipman, a lad named McKenzie, brother to the captain of the frigate, sprang ashore. The tide ebbing at the time, the boat's crew were ordered to shove off, and to go higher up to a deeper landing-place. While obeying this order they discovered the Americans on the bank above, and immediately pulled off shore, leaving their officer to his fate. Morgan, frustrated in the design he had formed to surprise and capture the boat's crew, now opened a fire upon them. The midshipman, comprehending at once his situation, plunged into the river, in the hope to regain his boat; but being deserted by the boat's crew, who pulled out still further from the reach of danger, and noticing the balls which now struck the water around him in fearful proximity to his head, he turned toward the shore, and otherwise signified his willingness to surrender."—*Life of Gen. Morgan, p.* 79.

shot of the walls, but saw none to oppose us; but when we were turned to go back they fired several cannon shots at us without doing any damage.

Nov'r 19. I was employed all the fore part of last night in butchering for the army, and about four in the morning got on our march and went to Point aux Trembles, about twenty-six miles above Quebec. We kept guard at the river Caroche.

December, 1775.

Dec'r 5. The detachment marched on their way to Quebec. We were quartered in a nunnery, near the town, but it was wanted for a hospital, and we went over the river St. Charles, where we continued.

Dec'r 10. Sunday.—Busy making scaling ladders, &c.

Dec'r 25. Had orders to give our opinion whether to scale or not.

Dec'r 26. Turned out to storm the town, but it was too light.

Dec'r 31. Sunday.—About four in the morning, were mustered in order to storm the town; it snowed and stormed and was very dark. Our company had not timely notice of the attack, which occasioned us to be too late, for when the firing began we had a mile and a half to march. We made all possible haste, and met Colonel Arnold going back wounded. I was on guard in St. Roque that night, and went forward with the main body, and was not with the company. The company went beyond Palace Gate, the enemy firing briskly at them from the walls, and killed two or three. The enemy sallied out, and they surrendered, as did all the detachment, except some few who made their escape. We were put into a monastery, among the friars; at night we had some biscuit distributed among us.

January, 1776.—Prisoner in Quebec.

Jan'y 1. We had a straw bed between two, and a blanket,

each man, served to us. We had some porter given us. Snowed in the morning.

Jan'y 3. We were ordered to give a list of our names, age, where we were born, and what regiment we belonged to. Snowed in the morning.

Jan'y 4. All the old countrymen were called into an other room and examined. Snowed in the morning.

Jan'y 5. They were called for again, and made to take arms for the king until the 31st May.

Jan'y 9. Very dark weather and snowed. Some more taken with the small pox, and we expect it will be a general disorder, for we are very thick, nasty, and lousy. Our living is salt pork, biscuit, rice, and butter, and a sufficiency allowed if we were not checked in our weight, by one Dewey, who is appointed our quartermaster-sergeant, to deal out our provi sion; and instead of being our friend, proves our greatest enemy, defrauding us of great part of our provision. We have not above three ounces of pork a day, and not half-pint of rice and two biscuits a day.

Jan'y 10. Fair, but excessive cold. I went to the hospital, having the small pox.

Jan'y 18. Cloudy and cold; several taken with the small pox; went to the hospital; some of our men's clothes brought into town from our army, but none for our company. I am now got almost well, having had the small pox lightly. A Frenchman being at the point of death, the nuns came and read over him, afterward the priest came in, then they fetched in a table, covered with a white cloth, and lighted two wax candles, about three feet long, and set them on the table. The priest put on a white robe over his other garments, and the nuns kneeled down, and the priest stood and read a sentence, and then the nuns a sentence, and so they went on some time; then the priest prayed by himself; then the nuns, and then the priest again; then they read altogether a spell, and finally the priest alone; then the priest stroked the man's face, and then they took away their candles and tables, &c., and the man died.

Jan'y 20. Dewey complained of fifteen of our men who

had agreed to fight their way out; two of them were put in irons.

Jan'y 21. Cloudy and cold; cleared in the afternoon. We were ordered to make a return of all the tradesmen among us. About this time two of our company, who were listed into the king's service, made their escape out of town. This day I came out of the hospital.

Jan'y 31. The time seems very long; no employment. Nothing heard or seen but playing at cards, swearing, and some playing away all their allowance of victuals; some employ themselves in making wooden spoons, little boxes, &c.; cloudy.

February, 1776.

Feb'y 10. An excessive bad snow storm; some sentries froze dead.

Feb'y 15. Clear weather. One of our men named Parrot, put in irons for calling one of the emigrants a tory. Our army opened a battery.

Feb'y 16. All the old countrymen brought into prison again, because six of them deserted last night.

Feb'y 24. Various reports concerning us; some say we shall be sent to England and sold as slaves to some island; others say that we shall be sent to Boston and exchanged; others say that we shall certainly be hanged; but we are in hopes that our people will release us by taking the town.

March, 1776.

March 1.—Clear and cold; one Brown put in irons for answering one of the sentries who abused him.

March 13.—We were removed to the goal, near St. John's gate, which is bomb-proof. Here we have the liberty of a yard of about a quarter of an acre.

March 17. Sunday, pleasant weather. The guard set over us are old Frenchmen and boys, who are very saucy, telling

us we shall be hanged; pointing their bayonets at us; threatening to shoot us for opening a window, or any such trifle.

March 21. Clear and cold. The French guard of boys and old men are very saucy—threatening us daily.

March 26. Last night one of our men escaped out of goal and got clear. About this time a plan was laid for our enlargement, and we prepared to break out and make our escape, by seizing the guard. Clear and cold.

March 31. Sunday. Snowed; our scheme found out; the sentry hearing some noise in the cellar, search was made, and some suspicion raised which might have passed off had not one of our men, John Hall, discovered the whole affair, and all the sergeants and corporals were put in irons.

April, 1776.

April 1. Fair weather. This morning the guard turned out and fired some time before the goal; then the alarm bell rang, and the cannon on the walls were fired in order to draw our army near the walls that they might cut them off with grape shot. This day we were almost all in irons.

April 3. Canonading on both sides. Our army are erecting a battery at Point Levi. Cloudy, and rained in the afternoon.

April 14. Sunday. Major McKenzie came in and took Captain Morgan's company out of irons. Clear in the morning; cloudy almost all day.

April 15. This day the Yorkers' time was out, and they wanted to go home, but were compelled to stay.

April 17. Had a week's allowance of fresh beef, which had been killed three or four months, of which they boasted much, telling us it was more than our army could get. Windy and cold.

April 22 The time seems long; all in irons; though most of us pull them off at night. I never lay but two nights with them on.

April 28. Some of our officers tried to make their escape, but were discovered and put in irons. Fair weather.

May, 1776.

May 6. Pleasant. About sunrise the town was alarmed, and three ships came up, landed some troops, and sailed up the river. The troops marched out at noon, and our army retreated, leaving a few sick men behind them, who were brought into town.*

May 7. Gen. Carleton came in and ordered our irons to be taken off. Pleasant day.

May 10. Two riflemen were taken out of goal; we don't know on what terms. Same day, two Jersey dumpling eaters were brought in; they were found among the bushes, not having tried to make their escape, being too heavy laden with dumplings and pork, a knapsack full of dumplings, and a quantity of flour. Fair in the morning; rained at night.

May 27. Ten ships arrived with troops.

June, 1776.

June 1. The Brunswickers arrived; said to be six thousand.

June 4. A royal salute fired, being the king's birth-day. Cloudy.

June 5. Pleasant weather. Gov. Carleton came in to us and offered to send us home on condition not to bear arms again.

June 8. Fair weather. Hear that there are three thousand of our men at Sartigan.

June 9. Fair weather. Sunday. Hear that they landed three thousand men, and our army defeated them.

June 10. Fair weather. Hear that two thousand of our men were surrounded and taken.

June 13. Fair weather. Hear they have taken two hun-

* General Thomas, who was appointed to succeed Montgomery, arrived early in May; but Carleton having received reinforcements under Burgoyne, the Americans were obliged to make a hasty retreat, leaving their stores and sick behind. The latter were kindly treated, and finally sent home.—*Lossing's Field Book of the Revolution, vol. i. p.* 202.

dred of our men, who are to be sent to Halifax. Heard that our men had sunk the Commodore.

June 17. Fair weather. Hear that our army have killed and taken four thousand Dutchmen.

June 19. A thunder storm, with hail stones as big as 2 oz. balls; a young woman was killed by the lightning.

June 23. Sunday. Fair weather. Hear that our men drove the king's troops.

June 24. Fair. Hear that our army have retreated out of Canada.

June 25. Fair weather. Hear that they have brought three hundred Jersey blues, prisoners, to town.

June 29. Fair weather. Hear that peace is proclaimed; also, that they have killed four thousand of our men and taken ten thousand, and that General Washington is killed.

June 30. Sunday. We hear there is a French fleet come in at Philadelphia, of seventy sail. Two ships came up to Quebec.

JULY, 1776.

July 4. Fair weather. We hear that they are waiting for some officers that they have taken, to come here, and then we shall be exchanged. Two prisoners brought in. Thunder at night.

July 5. Rainy morn; clear afternoon. One of our men was so indiscreet as to pull out one of the iron bars, in sight of the sentry. When he was relieved he fetched the officer of the guard and showed him what had been done, and search being made, some more were found out, which caused much suspicion of us all. The prisoners brought in last night inform us that the Indians scalped many of our soldiers, some of them alive; but that General Carleton, to his great honor, has refused to pay these murdering fiends for any more scalps, but will pay them the same reward for every prisoner.

July 6. Fair weather. Saw three ships working in. The man who pulled out the grate was informed of, so that we hope it will have no ill effect.

July 7. Sunday. Some showers in the morning. The man who pulled out the grate beat the man who informed of him, and he complained to the Provost. We hear that they have sent an express to the Governor, informing him we have made another attempt to break out; we have also a report that our officers had attempted to set the place they were confined in on fire. This, as well as many more reports, are not worth belief.

July 11. Fine morning; rained in the afternoon and night. Hear that Col. McLane is taken, and two thousand of their men, crossing the lake, and that there is a French fleet coming here. We also hear that the German troops are to return home.

July 12. Rained almost all day. Hear that we are to sail for New York in less than ten days.

July 14. Sunday. Fair weather. We hear we are to embark to-morrow.

July 15. Fair and moderate. Hear the Governor is expected in town soon, and then it will be known what will be done with us.

July 17. Showery cold. We have bread served to us, instead of our allowance of butter.

July 18. Fair and temperate. Hear that Col. McLane is come to town, and that the Governor is expected every minute.

July 19. Cloudy and cold; the weather is so cold that the Canadians do not expect a good crop of corn. It is so cold as to wear a great coat. We hear that Col. McLane says we shall not be sent home.

July 20. Fair weather. Connor, one of the prisoners who came into goal last, was taken and put in some place of confinement, and, as we suppose, put in irons for talking impertinently to the Captain of the Provost guard.

July 21. Rainy weather, with thunder. Hear that we are to go home very soon; heard from our officers, who gave us encouragement. We have also a report that the French, Spaniards and Prussians are at war with Great Britain, and that there is a large fleet in the bay of St. Lawrence.

July 22. Fair weather. Saw a ship sail out. This afternoon the Governor arrived from the army, and was saluted with fifteen guns. This gives us hope that we shall be sent home.

July 23. Cloudy morning; fair all day. One of our company is out of his right mind.

July 24. Rainy weather for part of the day. We hear we are to be sent to Montreal and exchanged.

July 25. Fair. Hear we are not to go home.

July 26. Some rain. We hear that the Governor has sent to let our officers know that within three days he will appoint a day when to send us home. Saw a brig and a ship come in.

July 27. Fair weather. We hear that the Governor has let our officers know that he will send us home on the 4th or 5th of August. This day we saw the French priest going to visit a sick person. He was attended by about twenty people, as follows: first a man goes ringing a little hand bell, then two men or boys, carrying two lanterns, with lighted candles on poles, about ten feet long; then comes the priest, under a canopy, supported by two men; it is like the teaster of a bed. The priest is dressed in white linen robes over his black clothes, and things as heavy as boards tied to his knees, and hang dangling and knocking against his shins. They have crosses on these two things. After the priest follow the friends and children of the sick person, and any others that happen to be going that way who think they are doing good to join in with the rest. Every one that hears the bell is obliged to kneel down while they pass by. The priest has a great cross upon his breast, and a string of wooden beads hanging by his side. The people all have these beads when they go to church, to help them remember their prayers. They also use the same ceremony when they go to a burying, and have choristers singing before the corpse.

July 28. Fair weather. This day, Mr. Murray, barrack master, came in and told us we were to sail in a week. We now begin to believe there is something in it, though we have had so many different reports that we can scarce believe any thing we hear. We are all to have a shirt a piece given us.

July 29. Rainy weather. Sias, the man who is out of his senses, grows worse, talking of killing some of the people, &c.

July 31. Fair weather. We hear a report that our army has reëntered Canada and retaken Fort St. Johns. We have been seven months in prison to-day.

August, 1776.

August 2. Fair weather. The news to-day is, that our people have wounded the German General mortally, and taken five hundred prisoners at Lake Champlain. We have it confirmed that we are to go on board the vessel on Sunday next.

August 3. Fair weather. Hear that our sick men, at the hospital, are to go on board this evening. We expect to go to-morrow morning.

August 4. Sunday. Fair weather.

August 5. Fair weather. This afternoon we have each of us a shirt given to us, and thirty-five of our men were sent on board, after signing the paper.

VI.

FROM THE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN AARON BURR AND HIS WIFE.

Mrs. Burr to Aaron Burr.—*Albany*, March 25, 1783. "Some think absence tends to increase affection; the greater part that it wears it away. I believe neither, but that it only tends to prove how far the heart is capable of loving; or

rather, whether it is real or imaginary. When the latter, every object that amuses, blots out the idea of the absent; we find that they are not so necessary to our happiness as we had fancied. But when that love is real, what can amuse, what engage the mind, to banish, for a single instant, the object of its delight? It hates every necessity that wrests it an instant from the contemplation of its beauties; its virtues are ever presenting themselves to increase our regret, and suggest innumerable fears for its safety. Such have been the occupations of this day. I tremble at every noise; new apprehensions are ever alarming me. Every tender sensation is awake to thee."

Mrs. Burr to Aaron Burr.—*Albany*, August 14, 1783. "How unfortunate, my dearest Aaron, is our present separation. I never shall have resolution to consent to another. We are certainly formed of different materials; and our undertakings must coincide with them.

"A few hours after I wrote you by Colonel Lewis, our sweet infant was taken ill, very ill. My mind and spirits have been on the rack from that moment to this. When she sleeps, I watch anxiously; when she wakes, anxious fears accompany every motion. I talked of my love towards her, but I knew it not till put to this unhappy test. I know not whether to give her medicine or withhold it: doubt and terror are the only sensations of which I am sensible. She has slept better last night, and appears more lively this morning than since her illness. This has induced me to postpone an express to you, which I have had in readiness since yesterday. If this meets you, I need not dwell upon my wish.

"I will only put an injunction on your riding so fast, or in the heat, or dew. Remember your presence is to support, to console your Theo., perhaps to rejoice with her at the restoration of our much-loved child. Let us encourage this hope; encourage it, at least, till you see me, which I flatter myself will be before this can reach you. Some kind spirit will whisper to my Aaron how much his tender attention is wanted to support his Theo.; how much his love is necessary to give her that

fortitude, that resolution, which nature has denied her but through his medium. Adieu. THEODOSIA."

MRS. BURR TO AARON BURR.—*New York*, March 22, 1784. "My Aaron scarce quitted the door when I regretted my passiveness. Why did I consent to his departure? Can interest repay the sacrifice? can aught on earth compensate for his presence? Why did I hesitate to decide? Ten thousand fears await me. What thought suggested my assent? The anxiety he might suffer were he to meet with obstacles to raising the sum required; should his views be frustrated for want of the precaution this journey might secure; his mortification; mine, at not having the power to relieve him, were arguments that silenced my longing wish to hold him near me; near me forever. My Aaron, dark is the hour that separates my soul from itself.

"Thus pensive, surrounded with gloom, thy Theo. sat, bewailing thy departure. Every breath of wind whistled terror; every noise at the door was mingled with hope of thy return, and fear of thy perseverance, when Brown arrived with the word—*embarked*—the wind high, the water rough. Heaven protect my Aaron; preserve him, restore him to his adoring mistress. A tedious hour elapsed, when our son was the joyful messenger of thy safe landing at Paulus Hook. Stiff with cold, how must his papa have fared? Yet, grateful for his safety, I blessed my God. I envied the ground which bore my pilgrim. I pursued each footstep. Love engrossed his mind; his last adieu to Bartow was the most persuasive token—'Wait till I reach the opposite shore, that you may bear the glad tidings to your trembling mother." O, Aaron, how I thank thee! Love in all its delirium hovers about me; like opium, it lulls me to soft repose! Sweet serenity speaks, 'tis my Aaron's spirit presides. Surrounding objects check my visionary charm. I fly to my room and give the day to thee."

AARON BURR TO MRS. BURR.—*Albany*, October 29, 1784. "Mr. Watts this instant acquaints me that he is just setting

off for New York. I run from court to waft you a memorandum of affection. I have been remarkably well; was fortunate in my journey. The trial of Livingston and Hoffman is now arguing. It began on Thursday of last week, and will not conclude till to-night. No other business has been or will be done this term. All this cursed long absence for nothing.

"I can not leave this till Sunday or Monday. Then to Westchester Court. The return to joy and Theo. cannot be till Thursday or Friday, and that depending on my business in Westchester. Miss Yates is on her passage to New York to spend eight or ten days.

"I read your memorandum ten times a day, and observed it as religiously as ever monk did his devotion. Yesterday I burnt it. To me it seemed like sacrilege.

"I fear I did not caution you enough against sleeping in the new house. For Heaven's sake (or rather for my sake,) don't think of it till I come and judge. I left you an immensity of trouble, which I fear has not promoted your health. Kiss our dear little flock for me. Adieu."

Aaron Burr to Mrs. Burr.—*Philadelphia*, April, 1785. "I shall be released on Tuesday evening, which will permit me to see thee on Thursday morning. Mr. Colt will inform you about everything. Unfortunately, a gentleman with whom part of our business is has left town. If he should return to-morrow morning, I shall be the happiest of swains on Wednesday morning. I am very minute in these calculations, because I make them very often. Does Theodosia employ herself ever in the same way?

"I have been to twenty places to find something to please you, but can see nothing that answers my wishes; you will therefore, I fear, only receive your affectionate A. Burr."

Mrs. Burr to Aaron Burr.—*New York*, April, Saturday, 1785. "I persuade myself this is the last day you spend in Philadelphia; that to-morrow's stage will bring you to Elizabethtown; that Tuesday morning you will breakfast with those who pass the tedious hours regretting your ab-

sence, and counting time till you return. Even little Theo. gives up her place on mamma's lap to tell dear papa—'come home.' Tell Augustine he does not know how much he owes me. 'Tis a sacrifice I would not make to any human being but himself, nor even to him again. It is the last time of my life I submit to your absence, except from necessity to the calls of your profession. All is well at home. Ireson gone on his intended journey. Morris very little here. The boys very attentive and industrious; much more so for being alone. Not a loud word spoken by the servants. All, in silent expectation, await the return of their much-loved lord; but *all faintly* when compared to thy THEO."

AARON BURR TO MRS. BURR.—*Albany*, April, 1785. "I feel impatient, and almost angry, that I have received no letter from you, though I really do not know of any opportunity by which you could have written; but it seems an endless while to wait till Saturday night before I can hear from you. How convenient would a little of the phlegm of *this region* be upon such occasions as these! I fear very much for our dear petite. I tell every one who asks me that both she and you are well, because I abhor the cold, uninterested inquiries, which I know would be made if I should answer otherwise. Do you want the pity of such? Those you thought your very good friends here have forgotten you.

Mademoiselle Y. is very civil. Are the Wadsworths with you? Have you not been tormented with some embarrassments which I wickedly left you to struggle with? I hope you don't believe the epithet. But why these questions, to which I can receive no answer but in person? I nevertheless fondly persuade myself that I shall receive answers to them all, and many more about yourself, which I have in mind, notwithstanding you will not have seen this. There is such a sympathy in our ideas and feeling, that you can't but know what will most interest me."

AARON BURR TO MRS. BURR.—*Chester*, May, 1785. "I strayed this morning for an hour or two in the woods, where

I lay on a rock to enjoy the wild retreat. The cheerfulness of all around me led me to ask why all animated nature enjoyed its being but man? Why man alone is discontented, anxious—sacrificing the present to idle expectations;—expectations which, if answered, are in like manner sacrificed. Never enjoying, always hoping? Answer, *tu mihi magna Apollo.* I would moralize, but time—and my companions are coming in. Let me hear of your health. Avoid all fatigue. Judge Yates proposes to come down with me. Quoi faire?

"My good landlady is out of tea, and begs me to send for a pound. Put it up very well. I am in better health than spirits. Adieu."

Mrs. Burr to Aaron Burr.—*New York*, May, 1785. "I am vexed that I did not inquire your route more particularly. I cannot trace you in imagination, nor find your spirit when at rest; nor dare I count the hours to your return. They are still too numerous, and add to my impatience. I expect my reward in the health you acquire. If it should prove otherwise, how I shall hate my acquiescence to your departure. I anticipate good or evil as my spirits rise or fall; but I know no medium; my mind cannot reach that stage of indifference. I fancy all my actions directed by you; this tends to spur my industry, and give calm to my leisure.

"The family as you left it. Bartow never quits the office, and is perfectly obliging. Your dear little daughter seeks you twenty times a day; calls you to your meals, and will not suffer your chair to be filled by any of the family. Judge Hobart called here yesterday; says you are absent for a month. I do not admit that among possibilities, and therefore am not alarmed. I feel obliged to Mr. Wickham for his delay, though I dare not give scope to my pen; my heart dictates too freely. O, my Aaron! how many tender, grateful things rush to my mind in this moment; how much fortitude do I summon to suppress them! You will do justice to their silence; to the inexpressible affection of your *plus tendre amie.*"

AARON BURR TO MRS. BURR.—*Chester*, May, 1785. "This morning came your kind, your affectionate, your truly welcome letter of Monday evening. Where did it loiter so long? Nothing in my absence is so flattering to me as your health and cheerfulness. I then contemplate nothing so eagerly as my return; amuse myself with ideas of my own happiness and dwell on the sweet domestic joys which I fancy prepared for me.

Nothing is so unfriendly to every species of enjoyment as melancholy. Gloom, however dressed, however caused, is incompatible with friendship. They can not have place in the mind at the same time. It is the secret, the malignant foe of sentiment and love. Adieu."

MRS. BURR TO AARON BURR.—*New York*, May, 1785. "Your dear letter was handed me this day, at a moment which, if possible, increased its value. I have a little fever hanging about me, which tends to depress my spirits for the time. Your moralizing changed my dullness to a pleasing melancholy. I am mortified at the interruption it met, and impatient to renew the theme; to renew it in a more pleasing manner than even your letters afford. When my health is ill, I find your absence is insupportable; every evil haunts me. It is the last that must take place till term; *that* I must submit to. I am pleased with your account of your health and spirits; they are both as I wish.

When you write again, speak of your return. The uncertainty makes it more irksome. The company you speak of will be as welcome as any at this juncture; but my health and mind seem to require the calm recreation of friendly sympathy; the heart that has long been united to mine by the tenderest esteem and confidence, who has made every little anxiety its own, to whom I can speak without reserve every imaginary wo, and whose kind consolation shall appease those miseries nature has imposed."

MRS. BURR TO AARON BURR.—*New York*, May, 1785. "Mr. Marvin calls for my letter this morning, which will be

delivered with a pound of green tea I have purchased for your landlady at two dollars. He has called. I am hurried. Ten thousand loves. *Toujours la votre* THEODOSIA."

AARON BURR to MRS. BURR.—*Janes, in the Mountains*, May, 1785. "The girls must give me a history of their time, from rising to night. The boys, any thing which interests them, and which, of course, will interest me. Are there any, or very pressing calls at the office? The word is given to mount. I shall have time to seal this and overtake them. Kiss for me those who love me."

MRS. BURR to AARON BURR.—*New-York*, April, 1785. "Mrs. Wickham just called to tell me of an opportunity to Chester. How joyfully I embrace it. I had a most insupportable impatience to communicate to you my gratitude and thanks for your last visit. It was a cordial to my health and spirits; a balm to my soul. My mind is flushed with pleasing hopes. Ten thousand tender thoughts rush to my pen; but the bearer may prove faithless. I will suppress them to a happier moment, and anticipate the dear indulgence.

"The family as you left it. Thy Theodosia's health and spirits increase daily. Bartow's industry and utility are striking to the family and strangers. Johnstone returned yesterday. Your letter was as eagerly read as though I had not seen you. Write when you have leisure; if it does not reach me immediately, it will serve to divert some tedious moment in a future absence; even when you are at home, engrossed by business, I frequently find a singular pleasure in perusing these testimonies of affection.

"I find I am continually speaking of myself. I can only account for it from my Aaron having persuaded me 'tis his favorite subject, and the extreme desire I have to please him induces me to pursue it. I take no walks but up one stairs and down the other. The situation of my house will not admit of my seeing many visiters. I hope some arrangement will be accomplished by the next week.

"I have fixed the time of seeing you Till Saturday I will

hope the best. I cannot extend my calculations beyond it· four days of your absence is an age to come."

AARON BURR to MRS. BURR.—*Chester*, May 19, 2, P. M. "We have this day begun the examination of witnesses, which, together with the arguments, will keep us the greater part, probably the whole, of next week. I find myself gaining strength exceedingly since my return from New York, though perfectly out of humor with the business, the distance, and the delay.

"My trip to New York has quite ruined me for business. I can not confine my mind to it. I am literally homesick, and think of nothing else. A witness, attending in court, informs me of his going to New York as soon as his testimony is finished. I desert a moment to tell you that I am wholly yours.

6 o'clock, P.M.—"Since I wrote you at two o'clock our court is adjourned till nine to-morrow. We go on briskly and in great good nature. If you were half as punctual as fortunate (which shall I call it?), I should absolutely fancy myself talking with you. It would be some indemnification for the distance and vexation. Make up in thinking of me, and taking care of yourself, what you omit in writing. Thine at all moments.

9 o'clock at night.—"A thousand thanks for your dear affectionate letter of Tuesday evening. I was just sitting pensively and half complaining of your remissness, when your letter is received and dispels every gloomy thought. I write this from the impulse of my feelings, and in obedience to your injunctions, having no opportunity in view.

"The letters of our dear children are a feast. Every part of them is pleasing and interesting. Le Jeune is not expected to be in New-York for some weeks at least. I avoid the subject. I shudder at the idea of suffering any thing to mar the happiness I promise myself.

"There is no possibility of my return till the middle of next week. In one of my letters I put it to the last of next week, but we have this day made unexpected progress. If we are

equally fortunate and equally good-natured, we may finish Wednesday night; but this is conjecture, and perhaps my impatience makes me too sanguine.

"I broke off at the bottom of the other page to pay some attention to those who deserve much from me (our dear children). To hear that they are employed, that no time is absolutely wasted, is the most flattering of any thing that can be told me of them. It ensures their affection, or is the best evidence of it. It ensures, in its consequences, every thing I am ambitious of in them. Endeavor to preserve regularity of hours; it conduces exceedingly to industry."

MRS. BURR TO AARON BURR.—*New York*, May 22, 1785. "Mr. Brown very punctually and civilly came with your welcome packet of Thursday, nine o'clock. It was just before dinner; the children were dispersed at different employments. I furnished the mantelpiece with the contents of the packet. When dinner was served up they were called. You know the usual eagerness on this occasion. They were all seated but Bartow, when he espied the letters; the surprise, the joy, the exclamations exceed description. The greatest stoic would have forgot himself. A silent tear betrayed me no *philosopher*. A most joyous repast succeeded. We talked of our happiness, our first of blessings, our best of papas. I enjoyed, my Aaron, the only happiness that could accrue from your absence. It was a momentary compensation; the only one I ever experienced.

"Your letters always afford me a singular satisfaction;—a sensation entirely my own; this was peculiarly so. It wrought strangely on my mind and spirits. My Aaron, it was replete with tenderness! with the most lively affection. I read and re-read, till afraid I should get it by rote, and mingling it with common ideas, profane the sacred pledge. No; it shall not be. I will economize the boon. I will limit the recreation to those moments of retirement devoted to thee. Of a sudden I found myself unusually fatigued. I reflected on the cause, and soon found that I had mounted the stairs much oftener than I could possibly have done on any other occasion.

"I am vexed with my last letter to you; 'tis impossible for me to disguise a single feeling or thought when I am writing or conversing with the friend of my heart. I hope you have attended only to the last paragraph, and avoid all unnecessary anxiety for her who wishes to be a constant source of pleasure to thee. I have been in good health since Saturday morning. Since yesterday, unusually gay and happy; anticipating a thousand pleasures, studying every little arrangement that can contribute to thy comfort. This wet weather is a bar to any essential progress. The walls are still too damp to admit of paint or paper. I have a bed ready for the judge; *ne vous genez pas la-dessus*. I am afraid some foolish reflection in my last will embarrass you. Your affection and tenderness has put them to flight. "Let nothing mar the promised bliss." Thy Theo. waits with inexpressible impatience to welcome the return of her truly beloved. Every domestic joy shall decorate his mansion. When Aaron smiles, shall Theo. frown? Forbid it every guardian power.

"Le Jeune perplexes me no longer. I am provoked with myself for having repeated it to you. Your dear little Theo. grows the most engaging child you ever saw. She frequently talks of, and calls on, her dear papa. It is impossible to see her with indifference. All moves as you wish it. All count the passing hours till thy return. Remember, I am in good health and spirits; that I expect the same account of yours. To think of me affectionately is my first command; to write me so, the second. Hasten to share the happiness of thy much loved and much loving THEODOSIA."

MRS. BURR TO AARON BURR.—*New York*, August 28, 1785. "Young —— and his companions have left us; at tasting your Madeira he pronounced you a d—d clever fellow. Your merit increased with the number of glasses; they went away in good humor with themselves and the hostess. O! my love, how earnestly I pray that our children may never be driven from your paternal direction. Had you been at home to-day, you would have felt as fervent in this prayer as your Theo.

Our children were impressed with utter contempt for their guest. This gave me real satisfaction.

"I really believe, my dear, few parents can boast of children whose minds are so prone to virtue. I see the reward of our assiduity with inexpressible delight, with a gratitude few experience. My Aaron, they have grateful hearts; some circumstances prove it, which I shall relate to you with singular pleasure at you return. I pity A. C. from my heart. She will feel the folly of an over zeal to accumulate. Bartow's assiduity and faithfulness is beyond description. My health is not worse. I have been disappointed in a horse; shall have Pharaoh to-morrow. Frederick is particularly attentive to my health: indeed, none of them are deficient in tenderness. All truly anxious for papa's return; we fix Tuesday, beyond a doubt, but hope impossibilities.

"I had a thousand things to write, but the idea of seeing you banishes every other thought. I fear much the violent exertions you are obliged to make will injure your health. Remember how dear, how important it is to the repose, to the life of Theodosia."

Mrs. Burr to Aaron Burr.—*New York*, August 29, 1785. "Our little daughter's health has improved beyond my expectations. Your dear Theodosia cannot hear you spoken of without an apparent melancholy; insomuch that her nurse is obliged to exert her invention to divert her, and myself avoid to mention you in her presence. She was one whole day indifferent to everything but your name. Her attachment is not of a common nature; though this was my opinion, I avoided the remark, when Mr. Grant observed it to me as a singular instance.

"You see I have followed your example in speaking first of myself. I esteemed it a real trait of your affection, a sympathy in the feelings, the anxiety of your Theo., who had every fear for your health; more than you would allow her to express."

Mrs. Burr to Aaron Burr.—*New York*, Sept'r 25, 1785. "Your dear letter of Saturday morning has just reached me.

I was relieved, delighted, till the recollection of the storm you have since weathered took place. How have you borne it? Ten thousand fears alarm me. I pursued thee yesterday, through wind and rain, till eve, when, fatigued, exhausted, shivering, thou didst reach thy haven, surrounded with inattention, thy Theo. from thee. Thus agitated, I laid my head upon a restless pillow, turning from side to side, when thy kindred spirit found its mate. I beheld my much-loved Aaron, his tender eyes fixed kindly on me; they spake a body wearied, wishing repose, but not sick. This soothed my troubled spirit: I slept tolerably, but dare not trust too confidently. I hasten to my friend to realize the delightful vision; naught but thy voice can tranquilize my mind. Thou art the constant subject of love, hope, and fear. The girls bewail the sufferings of their dear papa; the boys wish themselves in his place; Frederick frets at the badness of the horse; wishes money could put him in thy stead. The unaffected warmth of his heart delights me. If aught can alleviate thy absence, 'tis these testimonies of gratitude and affection from the young and guileless to the best of parents. They feel the hand that blesses them, and love because they are blessed."

Aaron Burr to Mrs. Burr.—*Albany*, November 2, 1785. "I have lived these three days upon the letters I expected this evening, and behold the stage without a line! I have been through the rain, and dark, and mud, hunting up every passenger to catechise them for letters, and can scarce yet believe that I am so totally forgotten.

"Our trial, of which I wrote you on Sunday, goes on moderately. It will certainly last till twelve o'clock on Saturday night; longer it cannot, that being the last hour of court. Of course, I leave this on Sunday; shall be detained at Westchester till about Thursday noon, and be home on Friday. This is my present prospect; a gloomy one, I confess; rendered more so by your unpardonable silence. I have a thousand questions to ask, but why ask of the dumb?

"I am quite recovered. The trial in which I am engaged is a fatiguing one, and in some respects vexatious. But it

puts me in better humor to reflect that you have just received my letter of Sunday, and are saying or thinking some good-natured things of me, determining to write anything that can amuse and interest me; everything that can atone for the late silence, or compensate for the hard fate that divides us.

"Since being here I have resolved that you in future accompany me on such excursions, and I am provoked to have yielded to your idle fears on this occasion. I have told here frequently, within a day or two, that I was never so long from home before, till, upon counting days, I find I have been frequently longer. I am so constantly anticipating the duration of this absence, that when I speak of it I realize the whole of it.

"Let me find that you have done justice to yourself and me. I shall forgive none the smallest omission on this head."

Aaron Burr to Mrs. Burr.—*Philadelphia*, December 4, 1791. "I fear I have for the present deprived you of the pleasure of reading Gibbon. If you cannot procure the loan of a London edition, I will send you that which I have here. In truth, I bought it for you, which is almost confessing a robbery. Edward Livingston and Richard Harrison have each a good set, and either would cheerfully oblige you.

"To render any reading really amusing or in any degree instructive, you should never pass a word you do not understand, or the name of a person or place of which you have not some knowledge. You will say that attention to such matters is too great an interruption. If so, do but note them down on paper, and devote an hour particularly to them when you have finished a chapter or come to a proper pause. After an experiment of this mode, you will never abandon it. Lempriere's Dictionary is that of which I spoke to you. Purchase also Macbeau's; this last is appropriated to ancient theocracy, fiction, and geography; both of them will be useful in reading Gibbon, and still more so in reading ancient authors, or of any period of ancient history.

"If you have never read Plutarch's Lives (or even if you

have), you will read them with much pleasure. They are in the City Library, and probably in many private ones. Beleo's Herodotus will amuse you. Bartow has it. You had better read the text without the notes; they are diffuse, and tend to distract the attention. Now and then they contain some useful explanation. After you have read the author, you will, I think, with more pleasure read the notes and remarks in course by themselves.

"You expressed a curiosity to peruse Paley's Philosophy of Natural History. Judge Hobart has it. If you read it, be sure to make yourself mistress of all the terms. But, if you continue your Gibbon, it will find you in employment for some days. When you are weary of soaring with him, and wish to descend into common life, read the Comedies of Plautus. There is a tolerable translation in the City Library. Such books give the most lively and amusing, perhaps much the most just picture, of the manners and degree of refinement of the age in which they were written. I have agreed with Popham for his share in the City Library.

"The reading of one book will invite you to another. I cannot, I fear, at this distance, advise you successfully; much less can I hope to assist you in your reading. You bid me be silent as to my expectations; for the present I obey. Your complaint of your memory, even if founded in fact, contains nothing discouraging or alarming. I would not wish you to possess that kind of memory which retains with accuracy and certainty all names and dates. I never knew it to accompany much invention or fancy. It is almost the exclusive blessing of dullness. The mind which perceives clearly adopts and appropriates an idea, and is thus enlarged and invigorated. It is of little moment whether the book, the time, or the occasion be recollected.

"I am inclined to dilate on these topics, and upon the effects of reading and study on the mind; but this would require an essay, and I have not time to write a letter. I am also much prompted to convince you, by undeniable proof, that the ground of your complaint does not exist except in your own apprehensions, but this I reserve for an interview. When I

am informed of your progress, and of the direction of your taste, I may have something further to recommend.

"There is no probability of an adjournment of Congress during the holydays, or for any longer time than one day The possibility of my being able to leave the business of Congress, and make a visit to New York, diminishes daily. I wish much to see you, and, if you are equally sincere, we can accomplish it by meeting at Trenton."

Aaron Burr to Mrs. Burr.—*Philadelphia*, December 18, 1791. "You have indeed, in your last letter, placed yourself before me in the most amiable light; and, without soliciting, have much more strongly enticed me to a visit. But for the present I must resist. Will it not be possible for you to meet me at Trenton, that we may travel together to New York? If you assent to this, I will name a day. Yet do not expose your health. On this subject you leave me still to apprehension and conjecture.

"Your account of Madame Genlis surprises me, and is a new evidence of the necessity of reading books before we put them into the hands of children. Reputation is indeed a precarious test. I can think at present of nothing better than what you have chosen."

VII.

FROM THE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN AARON BURR AND HIS DAUGHTER, THEODOSIA.

AARON BURR TO THEODOSIA.—*Westchester*, October 8, 1792. "I rose up suddenly from the sofa, and rubbing my head—'What book shall I buy for her?' said I to myself. 'She reads so much and so rapidly that it is not easy to find proper and amusing French books for her; and yet I am so flattered with her progress in that language, that I am resolved that she shall, at all events, be gratified. Indeed, I owe it to her.' So, after walking once or twice briskly across the floor, I took my hat, and sallied out, determined not to return till I had purchased something. It was not my first attempt. I went into one bookseller's shop after another. I found plenty of fairy tales and such nonsense, fit for the generality of children of nine or ten years old. 'These,' said I, 'will never do. Her understanding begins to be above such things;' but I could see nothing that I would offer with pleasure to *an intelligent, well-informed girl of nine years old.* I began to be discouraged. The hour of dining was come. 'But I will search a little longer.' I persevered. At last I found it. I found the very thing I sought. It is contained in two volumes octavo, handsomely bound, and with prints and registers. It is a work of fancy, but replete with instruction and amusement. I must present it with my own hand."

AARON BURR TO THEODOSIA.—*Philadelphia*, December 16, 1793. "I have a thousand questions to ask, my dear Theo., but nothing to communicate; and thus I fear it will be throughout the winter, for my time is consumed in the dull uniformity of study and attendance in Senate; but every hour of *your* day is interesting to *me*. I would give, what would I not give, to

see or know even your most trifling actions and amusements? This, however, is more than I can ask or expect. But I do expect with impatience your journal. Ten minutes every evening I demand; if you should choose to make it twenty, I shall be the better pleased. You are to note the occurrences of the day as concisely as you can; and, at your pleasure, to add any short reflections or remarks that may arise. On the other leaf I give you a sample of the manner of your journal for one day.

"*Plan of a Journal.*

"16th December, 1793.

"Learned 230 lines, which finished Horace. Heigh-ho for Terence and the Greek grammar to-morrow.

"Practised two hours less thirty-five minutes, which I begged off.

"Hewlett (dancing-master) did not come.

"Began Gibbon last evening. I find he requires as much study and attention as Horace; so I shall not rank the reading of *him* among amusements.

"Skated an hour; fell twenty times, and find the advantage of a hard head, and

"Ma better—dined with us at table, and is still sitting up, and free from pain."

AARON BURR TO THEODOSIA.—*Philadelphia*, December 25, 1793. "The letter, my dear Theo., which (I have no doubt) you wrote me last Sunday, has not yet come to hand. Am I to blame Strong? or the postmaster? or whom?

"When you have finished a letter, read it carefully over, and correct all the errors you can discover. In your last there were some which could not, upon an attentive perusal, have escaped your notice, as you shall see when we meet.

"I have asked you a great many questions, to which I have as yet no answers. When you *sit* down to write to me, or

when you *set* about it, be it sitting or standing, peruse all my letters, and leave nothing unanswered. Adieu."

AARON BURR TO THEODOSIA.—*Philadelphia*, December 31, 1793. "I received your letter and journal yesterday in the Senate Chamber, just before the closing of the mail, so that I had only time to acknowledge it by a hasty line. You see I never let your letters remain a day unanswered, in which I wish you would imitate me. Your last had no date; from the last date in the journal, and your writing about Christmas holidays as yet at some distance, I suppose you wrote about Sunday the 22d. Nine days ago! I beg you again to read over all my letters, and to let me see by your answers that you attend to them. I suspect your last journal was not written from day to day; but all on one, or at most two days, from memory. How is this? Ten or fifteen minutes every evening would not be an unreasonable sacrifice from *you* to *me*. If you took the Christmas holidays, I assent; if you did not, we cannot recall the time. This is all the answer which that part of your letter now admits of.

"It is said that some few yet die of the yellow fever, which lately raged here; but the disorder does not appear to be, *at present*, in any degree contageous; what *may* be the case upon the return of warm weather, is a subject of anxious conjecture and apprehension. It is probable that the session of Congress will continue into the summer.

"Give a place to your mamma's health in your journal. Omit the formal conclusion of your letters, and write your name in a larger hand. I am just going to Senate, where I hope to meet a letter from you, with a continuation of your journal down to the 29th inclusive, which, if it gives a good account of you and mamma, will gladden the heart of A. BURR."

AARON BURR TO THEODOSIA.—*Philadelphia*, December 31, 1793. "This day's mail has brought me nothing from you. I have but two letters in three, almost four weeks, and the journal is ten days in arrear. What! can neither affection

nor civility induce you to devote to me the small portion of time which I have required? Are authority and compulsion then the only engines by which you can be moved? For shame, Theo.! Do not give me reason to think so ill of you"

AARON BURR TO THEODOSIA.—*Philadelphia*, January 4, 1794. "At the moment of closing the mail yesterday, I received your letter enclosing the pills. I cannot refer to it by date, as it has none. Tell me truly, did you write it without assistance? Is the language and spelling your own? If so, it does you much honor. The subject of it obliged me to show it to Dr. Rush, which I did with great pride. He inquired your age half a dozen times, and paid some handsome compliments to the handwriting, the style, and the correctness of your letter.

"The account of your mamma's health distresses me extremely. If she does not get better soon, I will quit Congress altogether, and go home.

"My last letter to you was almost an angry one, at which you cannot be much surprised when you recollect the length of time of your silence, and that you are my only correspondent respecting the concerns of the family. I expect, on Monday or Tuesday next, to receive the continuation of your journal for *the fortnight past*.

"Mr. Leshlie will tell you that I have given directions for your commencing Greek. One half hour faithfully applied by yourself at study, and another at recitation with Mr. Leshlie, will suffice to advance you rapidly."

AARON BURR TO THEODOSIA.—*Philadelphia*, January 7, 1794. "When your letters are written with tolerable spirit and correctness, I read them two or three times before I perceive any fault in them, being wholly engaged with the pleasure they afford me; but, for your sake, it is necessary that I should also peruse them with an eye of criticism. The following are the only mispelled words. You write *acurate* for *accurate*; *laudnam* for *laudanum*; *intirely* for *entirely*; this last

word, indeed, is spelled both ways, but *entirely* is the most usual and the most proper.

"Continue to use all these words in your next letter, that I may see that you know the true spelling. And tell me what is laudanum? Where and how made? And what are its effects?

"——'It was what she had long wished for, and was at a loss how to procure *it*.'

"Don't you see that this sentence would have been perfect and much more elegant without the last *it?* Mr. Leshlie will explain to you why. By-the-by, I took the liberty to erase the redundant *it* before I showed the letter.

"I am extremely impatient for your farther account of mamma's health. The necessity of laudanum twice a day is a very disagreeable and alarming circumstance. Your letter was written a week ago, since which I have no account. I am just going to the Senate Chamber, where I hope to meet a journal and letter."

Aaron Burr to Theodosia.—*Philadelphia*, January 8, 1794. "Your two letters of Friday and Saturday came together by yesterday's mail, which did not arrive till near sunset. Your letter of Friday was not put into the post-office until Saturday afternoon. You might as well have kept it in your own hands till Monday eleven o'clock. Since the receipt of these letters I have been three times to Dr. Rush to consult him about a drink for your mamma; but not having had the good fortune to find him, have written to him on the subject. I shall undoubtedly procure an answer in the course of this day, and will forward it by to-morrow's post.

"I beg, Miss Prissy, that you will be pleased to name a single '*unsuccessful effort*' which you have made to please me. As to the letters and journals which you *did* write, surely you have reason abundant to believe that they gave me pleasure; and how the deuce I am to be pleased with those you *did not* write, and how an omission to write can be called an '*effort*,' remains for your ingenuity to disclose.

"You improve much in journalizing. Your last is far more sprightly than any of the preceding. Fifty-six lines sola was, I admit, an *effort* worthy of yourself, and which I hope will be often repeated. But pray, when you have got up to two hundred lines a lesson, why do you go back again to one hundred and twenty, and one hundred and twenty-five? You should strive never to diminish; but I suppose that *vis inertiæ*, which is often so troublesome to you, does sometimes preponderate. So it is, now and then, even with your A. Burr.

"Learn the difference between *then* and *than*. You will soonest perceive it by translating them into Latin.

"Let me see how handsomely you can subscribe your name to your next letter, about this size, A. Burr.

Aaron Burr to Theodosia.—*Philadelphia*, January 13, 1794. "Your letter of the 9th, my dear Theo., was a most agreeable surprise to me. I had not dared even to hope for one until to-morrow. In one instance, at least, an attempt to please me has not been 'unsuccessful.' You see I do not forget that piece of impudence.

"I was yesterday thronged with company from eight in the morning till eleven at night. The Greek signature, though a little mistaken, was not lost upon me. I have a letter from Mr. Leshlie, which pays you many compliments. He has also ventured to promise that you will every day get a lesson in Terence by yourself. You know how grateful this will be to A. Burr."

Aaron Burr to Theodosia.—*Philadelphia*, January 14, 1794. "I really think, my dear Theo., that you will be very soon beyond all verbal criticism, and that my whole attention will be presently directed to the improvement of your style. Your letter of the 9th is remarkably correct in point of spelling. That word rec*ie*ved still escapes your attention. Try again. The words *wold* and *shold* are mere carelessness; necessery instead of necessary, belongs, I suppose, to the same class.

"'Dr. B. called here, but did not speak of his having re*ci*eved a letter from you, but desired,' &c.

"When I copied the foregoing, I intended to have shown you how to improve it; but, upon second thought, determine to leave it to yourself. Do me the favor to *endorse* it on, or *subjoin* it to, your next letter, corrected and *varied* according to the best of your skill.

"'Ma begs you will omit the thoughts of leaving Congress,' &c.; 'omit' is improperly used here. You mean '*abandon*, *relinquish*, *renounce*, or *abjure* the thoughts,' &c. Your mamma, Mr. Leshlie, or your dictionary (Johnson's folio), will teach you the force of this observation. The last of these words would have been too strong for the occasion.

"You have used with *propriety* the words 'encomium' and 'adopted.' I hope you may have frequent occasions for the former, with the like application.

"'Cannot be committed to paper,' is well expressed."

AARON BURR TO THEODOSIA.—*Philadelphia*, January 16, 1794. "I hope the mercury, if tried, will be used with the most vigilant caution and the most attentive observation of its first effects. I am extremely anxious and apprehensive about the event of such an experiment.

"I fear, my dear little girl, that my letter of the 13th imposed too much upon you; if so, dispense with what you may find too troublesome. You perceive by this license the entire confidence which I place in your discretion.

"Your journal still advances towards perfection. But the letter which accompanied it is, I remark with regret, rather a falling off. I have received none more carelessly written, or with more numerous omissions of words. I am sensible that many apologies are at hand; but you, perhaps, would not be sensible that any were necessary, if I should omit to remind you.

"I continue the practice of scoring words for our mutual improvement. The use, as applicable to you, was indicated in a former letter.

"I am sure you will be charmed with the Greek language above all others. Adieu."

AARON BURR TO THEODOSIA.—*Philadelphia*, January 23, 1794. "Io, triumphe! There is not a word mispelled either in your journal or letter, which cannot be said of a single page you ever before wrote. The fable is quite classical, and, if not very much corrected by Mr. Leshlie, is truly a surprising performance, and written most beautifully. But what has become of poor Alpha Beta? Discouraged? That is impossible. Laid aside for the present? That, indeed, is possible, but by no means probable. Shall I guess again? Yes; you mean to surprise me with some astonishing progress. And yet, to confess the truth, your lessons in Terence, Exercises, and 'music' (without a *k*, observe) seem to leave little time for any other study. I must remain in suspense for four days longer.

"Doctor Rush thinks that bark would not be amiss, but may be beneficial if the stomach does not rebuke it, which must be constantly the first object of attention. He recommends either the cold infusion or substance as least likely to offend the stomach.

"Be able, upon my arrival, to tell me the difference between an *infusion* and *decoction;* and the history, the virtues, and the *botanical* or medical name of the bark. Chambers will tell you more perhaps than you will wish to read of it. Your little mercurial disquisition is ingenious and prettily told."

AARON BURR TO THEODOSIA.—*Philadelphia*, February 13, 1794. "I received your letter and enclosures yesterday in Senate. I stopped reading the letter, and took up the story in the place you directed; was really affected by the interesting little tale, faithfully believing it had been taken from the Mag. D'Enf., and was astonished and delighted when I recurred to the letter and found the little deception you had played upon me. It is concisely and handsomely told, and is indeed a performance above your years.

"Mr. Leshlie is not, I am afraid, a competent judge of what you are capable of learning: you must convince him that you can, when you set in earnest about it, accomplish wonders.

"Do you mean that the forty lines which you construed in Virgil were in a part you had not before learned?"

AARON BURR TO THEODOSIA.—*Philadelphia*, March 7, 1794. "Your letter of the 4th was three days on the road. I am certain that I have answered punctually all which have come to hand. True, I have not written to you as during the first few weeks of my residence here. For the last month I have been very much occupied by public business. You will need no other proof of it when I tell you that near twenty unanswered letters are now on my desk, not one of yours among them, however, except that received last evening. I have not even been to the theatre except about an hour, and then it was more an errand of business than amusement."

AARON BURR TO THEODOSIA.—*Philadelphia*, March 31 1794. "I am distressed at your loss of time. I do not, indeed, wholly blame you for it, but this does not diminish my regret. When you want punctuality in your letters, I am sure you want it in every thing; for you will constantly observe that you have the most leisure when you do the most business. Negligence of one's duty produces a self-dissatisfaction which unfits the mind for everything, and *ennui* and peevishness are the never failing consequences. You will readily discover the truth of these remarks by reflecting on your own conduct, and the different feelings which have flowed from a persevering attention to study, or a restless neglect of it.

"I shall in a few days (this week) send you a most beautiful assortment of flower seeds and flowering shrubs.

"If I do not receive a letter from you to-morrow, I shall be out of all patience. Every day's journal will, I hope, say something of mamma."

AARON BURR TO THEODOSIA.—*Philadelphia*, June 7, 1794. "I have received my dear Theo.'s two little, very little, French letters. The last left you tormented with headache and toothache, too much for one poor little girl to suffer at one time, I am sure; you had doubtless taken some sudden cold. You

must fight them as well as you can till I come, and then I will engage to keep them at bay.

"Whatever you shall translate of Terence, I beg you to have copied in a book in a very fair handwriting."

AARON BURR TO THEODOSIA.—*Albany*, August 4, 1794. "We arrived here yesterday, after a hot, tedious passage of *seven days*. We were delayed as well by accidents as by calms and contrary winds.

* * * * * * *

"On my arrival I was delighted to receive your letter of the 30th, with the journal of that and the preceding days. Your history of those three days is very full and satisfactory, and has induced me, by way of return, to enlarge on the particulars of my journey. I am quite gratified that you have secured Mrs. Penn's (observe how it is spelled) good opinion, and content with your reasons for not saying the civil things you intended. In case you should dine in company with her, I will apprize you of one circumstance, by a trifling attention to which you may elevate yourself in her esteem. She is a great advocate for a very plain, rather abstemious diet in children, as you may see by her conduct with Miss Elizabeth. Be careful, to eat of but one dish; that a plain roast or boiled; little or no gravy or butter, and *very sparingly* of desert or fruit; not more than half a glass of wine; and if more of any thing to eat or drink is offered, decline it. If they ask a reason—*Papa thinks it not good for me*, is the best that can be given.

"It was with great pain and reluctance that I made this journey without you. But your manners are not yet quite sufficiently formed to enable you to do justice to your own character, and the expectations which are formed of you, or to my wishes. Improve, therefore, to the utmost the present opportunity; inquire of every point of behavior about which you are embarrassed; imitate as much as you can the manners of Madame De S., and observe also every thing which Mrs. Penn says and does.

"You should direct your own breakfast. Send Cesar every

morning for a pint of milk for you; and, to save trouble to Madame De S., let her know that you eat at breakfast only bread and butter.

"I wish you would read over your letters after you have written them; for so many words are omitted, that in some places I cannot make out the sense, *if any they contain*. Make your figures or ciphers in your letters, but write out the numbers at length, except dates. Adieu, affectionately adieu."

AARON BURR TO THEODOSIA.—*Albany*, August 14, 1794. "Four pages in Lucian was a great lesson; and why, my dear Theo., can't this be done a little oftener? You must, by this time, I think, have gone through Lucian. I wish you to begin and go through it again; for it would be shameful to pretend to have read a book of which you could not construe a page. At the second reading you will, I suppose, be able to double your lessons; so that you may go through it in three weeks. You say nothing of writing or learning Greek verbs;—is this practice discontinued? and why?

"Do you continue to preserve Madame De S.'s good opinion of your talents for the harp? And do you find that you converse with more facility in the French? These are interesting questions, and your answer to this will, I hope, answer fully all the questions it contains. Vale, vale."

AARON BURR TO THEODOSIA.—*Albany*, August 18, 1794. "Yesterday I received your letter and journal to the 13th inclusive. On the 13th, you say, you got nine pages in Lucian. It was to be sure, a most surprising lesson. I suspect it must have been the second time going over; and even then it would have been great, and at the same rate you will be through a second time before my month is up. I should be delighted to find it so. I have not told you directly that I should stay longer than a month, but I was angry enough with you to stay three months when you neglected to write to me for two successive posts.

"I am very sorry to see so many blank days with Mr. Leshlie. If he is not at your room within a quarter of an

hour of his time, Cesar should be fortwith sent off express for him. Let Cesar, therefore, call on you every morning at the hour Mr. Leshlie ought to come."

AARON BURR TO THEODOSIA.—*Philadelphia*, Dec. 21, 1794. "I obeyed faithfully the command in your letter which bade me read the journal first, and I read it with great eagerness, hoping to find what I did find in the last sentence. That 16th was really a surprising day. Three hundred and ninety-five lines, all your exercises, and all your music. Go on, my dear girl, and you will become all that I wish.

"I keep carefully your letters and journals, and when we meet you shall read them again, which I am sure you will do with pleasure. It is always delightful to see and correct our own errors.

"Monsieur Maupertius is highly mortified that you should suppose him so ignorant as to have lost himself on the road. It seems he only went a little off the highway *from curiosity to see the country*.

"I hope you like Terence. Can't you lug a scrap from him now and then, apropos, into your letters? It will please your affectionate papa, A. BURR."

AARON BURR TO THEODOSIA.—*Philadelphia*, January 23, 1797. "You must not 'puzzle all day,' my dear little girl, at one hard lesson. After puzzling faithfully one hour, apply to your arithmetic, and do enough to convince the doctor that you have not been idle. Neither must you be discouraged by one unlucky day. The doctor is a very reasonable man, and makes all due allowance for the levities as well as for the stupidity of children. I think you will not often challenge his indulgence on either score.

"And do you regret that you are not also a woman? That you are not numbered in that galaxy of beauty which adorns an assembly-room? Coquetting for admiration and attracting flattery? No. I answer with confidence. You feel that you are maturing for solid friendship. The friends you gain you will never lose; and no one, I think, will dare to insult your

understanding by such compliments as are most graciously received by too many of your sex.

"How unpardonably you neglect C. and N. B. Where are the promised letters? I see with delight that you improve in diction, and in the combination and arrangement of your little ideas. With a view to farther improvement, your letters to me are a most useful exercise. I feel persuaded that all my hopes and wishes concerning you will be accomplished.

"Never use a word which does not fully express your thoughts, or which, for any other reason, does not please you. Hunt your dictionary till you find one. Arrange a whole sentence in your mind before you write a word of it; and, whatever may be your 'hurry' (never be in a *hurry*), read over a letter slowly and carefully before you seal it. Interline and erase lightly with your pen what may appear to you to require amendment or correction. I dispense with your copying unless the letter should be much defaced, in which case keep it till the next mail. Copy and improve it.

"Your play on 'Light' is pretty and witty, and the turn on the *dear little* letter does not dishonour the metempsychosis of Madame Dacier.

"I shall probably see you very soon; we will then re-arrange your hours, and endeavour to remove the present and forestall all future troubles. I should be mortified—I should be almost offended—if I should find that you passed over any word in my letters without becoming perfectly acquainted with its meaning, use, and *etymology*."

Aaron Burr to Theodosia.—*Albany*, January 4, 1799. "On Tuesday I arrived here, and yesterday received your two letters of the 29th and 30th of December. Your despondency distresses me extremely. It is indeed unfortunate, my dear Theodosia, that we are constrained to be separated. I had never so much need of your society and friendship, nor you, perhaps, of mine. It is a misfortune which I sincerely regret every hour of the day. It is one, however, which you must aid me to support, by testifying that you can support your share of it with firmness and activity. An effort made

with decision will convince you that you are able to accomplish all I wish and all you desire. Determination and perseverance in every laudable undertaking is the great point of difference between the silly and the wise. It is essentially a part of your character, and requires but an effort to bring it into action. The happiness of my life depends on your exertions; for what else, for whom else do I live? Not that the acquisition of the languages alone can decide your happiness or mine; but if you should abandon the attempt, or despair of success, or relax your endeavours, it would indicate a feebleness of character which would dishearten me exceedingly. It is for my sake that you now labour. I shall acknowledge your advancement with gratitude and with the most lively pleasure. Let me entreat you not to be discouraged. I know you to be capable of much greater efforts than this will require. If your young teacher, after a week's trial, should not suit you, dismiss him on any pretence without wounding his pride, and take the old Scotchman. Resolve to succeed, and you cannot fail.

"I parted with you amid so much hurry and confusion, and so many vexations, that, when I had time to reflect, I seemed to have said none of the things which I had wished and intended. I reproached myself perpetually that I had not urged you to attend me. Your letters almost confirmed me in the design of returning to fetch you; and yet more sober reason seems to tell me that these things were rather the effusions of sentiment than of a deliberate estimate of your real interests. In six weeks, however, we shall meet.

"I intended to have recommended to you the ancient and modern history of Millot. Natalie has some of the volumes—some are in the library at Mrs. D.'s, of which I hope you keep the key. Millot is concise, perspicuous, and well selected. Rollin is full of tedious details and superstitious nonsense.

"There is nothing more certain than that you may form what countenance you please. An open, serene, intelligent countenance, a little brightened by cheerfulness, not wrought into smiles or simpers, will presently become familiar and

grow into habit. A year will with certainty accomplish it. Your physiognomy has naturally much of benevolence, and it will cost you some labour (which you may well spare) to eradicate it. Avoid, for ever avoid, a smile or sneer of contempt; never even mimic them. A frown of sullenness or discontent is but one degree less hateful. You seem to require these things of me, or I should have thought them unnecessary. I see, with pleasure I see, that you have engaged in this matter. We shall both be gratified by the result, which cannot fail to accord with our wishes."

AARON BURR TO THEODOSIA.—*Albany*, February 11, 1799. "Your name to one letter is beautifully written; to the other, *la la*. The handwriting of the letters various; very good, very bad, and middling; emblematic, shall I say, of the fair authoress? Please to resolve me whether author is not of both genders, for I hate the appendix of *ess*?

"What novel of Miss Burney or D'Arbley is that in which the heroine begins by an interesting account of little details on her début in London, and particularly of a ball where she met Lord Somebody and did twenty ridiculous things? I want such a description of a ball from you. Be pleased to read those first letters of the novel referred to, and take them for a model.

"The ideas, of which you are the object, that daily pass through my mind, would, if committed to writing, fill an octavo volume; invent, then, and teach me some mode of writing with the facility and rapidity that we think, and you shall receive by every mail some hundred pages. But to select from a thousand thoughts that which is best and most seasonable; of the variety of attitudes of which every object is susceptible, to determine on that which is most suitable for the thing and the occasion; of all possible modes of expression and language, to discern the most appropriate, *hic labor, hoc opus est.* Yet have we both known persons of a moderate grade of intellect who could write whenever you would put a pen in their hands, and for any length of time you might please, without one moment of reflection or embarrassment.

Pray explain to me this phenomenon. All this I confess is not very applicable to you or to my present occupation, for I generally write you what first offers, without considering whether it be the best; and if many obtrude themselves at once, I write you, as at present, of—*nothing*.

"Indeed, my dear Theodosia, I have many, many moments of solicitude about you. Remember that occupation will infallibly expel the fiend ennui, and that solitude is the bugbear of fools. God bless and aid thee."

AARON BURR TO THEODOSIA.—*Albany*, January 30, 1800. "At length John and Alexis have arrived; but what gratified me more, and what I looked for with much more impatience was, a letter. I selected yours from the number which they brought me. I was not disappointed. It merits all the eagerness with which I had expected it.

"You reflect, and that is a security for your conduct. Our most humiliating errors proceed usually from inattention, and from that mental dissipation which we call heedlessness. You estimate your situation with great truth. Many are surprised that I could repose in you so great a trust as that of yourself; but I knew that you were equal to it, and I am not deceived.

"You do right to stay much at home. It will scarcely be worth while to go to V. P.'s. C. is excluded from all rule. I am quite oppressed with the kindness and friendship of *b. b.* towards you. How fortunate you are in such a friend. If their invitations should be so frequent as to interrupt your lessons, you will do well to refuse even them. There is a measure to be observed in the acceptance of the good offices even of our best friends; and at your age, to prefer duty from pleasure when they are in collision, is a degree of firmness rarely exhibited, and, therefore, the more calculated to inspire respect. I perceive that I am not very explicit; but you will *reflect* and discern my meaning. Montesquieu said he wrote to make people think, and not to make them read—and why may not A. Br.? Perhaps, however, there may be no collisions; and then your good sense will teach you not to wear out good-will."

Theodosia (married) to Aaron Burr.—*Petersburgh, Va.*, October 21, 1803. "The longer I live, the more frequently the truth of your advice evinces itself, and never was there any thing more true, than that occupation is necessary to give one command over themselves. I confess I feel myself growing quite cross on the journey, and it is really to be feared, that, unless we soon finish it, the serene tranquility of my placid temper may be injured. Novel reading has, I find, not only the ill effect of rendering people romantic, which, thanks to my father on earth, I am long past, but they really furnish no occupation to the mind. A series of events follow so rapidly, and are interwoven with remarks so commonplace and so spun out, that there is nothing left to reflect upon. A collection of images, which amuse only from their variety and rapid succession, like the pictures of a magic lantern; not like a piece of Vanderlyn, where the painter makes fine touches, and leaves to your vanity at least the merit of discovering them. O! would I had my friend Sterne. Half, he says, has no meaning, and, therefore, every time I read him I find a different one.

"The boy has perfectly recovered. He remembers you astonishingly. He is constantly repeating that you are gone, and calling after you. When I told him to call Mr. Alston grandfather—'Grandfather gone,' says he. I kiss you from my heart."

Aaron Burr to Theodosia.—*New York*, July 1, 1804. (A few days before the duel with Hamilton.) "Having been shivering with cold all day, though in perfect health, I have now, just at sunset, had a fire in my library, and am sitting near it and enjoying it, if that word be applicable to any thing done in solitude. Some very wise man, however, has exclaimed,

"Oh! fools, who think it solitude to be alone."

This is but poetry. Let us, therefore, drop the subject, lest it lead to another on which I have imposed silence on myself.

"You ought to be collecting a few books for your own use. One way of forming a small library, and which I recommend to you, is to note down the title of every book which, either from its reputation or from perusal, you may wish to possess. Make you a small memorandum book for this purpose. If they be written on loose scraps, by the time you get a dozen, eleven of them will be lost. I recommend to you a new publication called the Edinburgh Review. One number is issued every three months. The plan of the editors differs from that of similar works in that they give more copious extracts, and notice only books of merit or *reputation*.

"I wait impatiently for some of your tales. No hasty scrawls, madam, for I will correct nothing. We have now here three shiploads of South Carolinians, who all find the weather intolerably hot, though I have slept under a blanket every night except one in all June."

AARON BURR TO THEODOSIA.—*New York*, July 10, 1804. (The day before the duel.) "Having lately written my will, and given my private letters and papers in charge to you, I have no other direction to give you on the subject but to request you to burn all such as, if by accident made public, would injure any person. This is more particularly applicable to the letters of my female correspondents. All my letters, and copies of letters, of which I have retained copies, are in the six blue boxes. If your husband or any one else (no one, however, could do it so well as he) should think it worth while to write a sketch of my life, some materials will be found among these letters.

"Tell my dear Natalie that I have not left her anything, for the very good reason that I had nothing to leave to any one. My estate will just about pay my debts and no more—I mean, if I should die this year. If I live a few years, it is probable things may be better. Give Natalie one of the pictures of me. There are three in this house; that of Stewart, and two by Vanderlyn. Give her any other little tokens she may desire. One of those pictures, also, I pray you to give to Doctor Eustis. To Bartow something—what you please.

"I pray you and your husband to convey to Peggy the small lot, not numbered, which is the fourth article mentioned in my list of property. It is worth about two hundred and fifty dollars. Give her also fifty dollars in cash as a reward for her fidelity. Dispose of Nancy as you please. She is honest, robust, and good-tempered. Peter is the most intelligent and best-disposed black I have ever known. (I mean the black boy I bought last fall from Mr. Turnbull.) I advise you, by all means, to keep him as the valet of your son. Persuade Peggy to live with you if you can.

"I have desired that my wearing apparel be given to Frederic. Give him also a sword or pair of pistols.

"Burn immediately a small bundle, tied with a red string, which you will find in the little flat writing-case—that which we used with the curricle. The bundle is marked "*Put.*"

"The letters of *Clara* (the greater part of them) are tied up in a white handkerchief, which you will find in the blue box No. 5. You may hand them to Mari, if you please. My letters to Clara are in the same bundle. You, and by-and-by Aaron Burr Alston, may laugh at *gamp* when you look over this nonsense.

"Many of the letters of *Clara* will be found among my ordinary letters, filed and marked, sometimes "*Clara*," sometimes "L."

"I am indebted to you, my dearest Theodosia, for a very great portion of the happiness which I have enjoyed in this life. You have completely satisfied all that my heart and affections had hoped or even wished. With a little more perseverance, determination, and industry, you will obtain all that my ambition or vanity had fondly imagined. Let your son have occasion to be proud that he had a mother. Adieu. Adieu. A. BURR.

"I have directed that the flat writing-case and the blue box No. 5, both in the library, be opened only by you. There are six of these blue boxes, which contain my letters and copies of letters, except those two clumsy quarto volumes, in which letter-press copies are pasted. They are some-

where in the library. The keys of the other five boxes are in No. 5.

"It just now occurs to me to give poor dear Frederic my watch. I have already directed my executors here to give him my wearing apparel. When you come hither you must send for Frederic, and open your whole heart to him. He loves *me* almost as much as Theodosia does; and he does love *you* to adoration.

"I have just now found four packets of letters between *Clara and Mentor* besides those in the handkerchief. I have thrown them loose into box No. 5. What a medley you will find in that box!

"The seal of the late General Washington, which you will find in the blue box No. 5, was given to me by Mr. and Mrs. Law. You may keep it for your son, or give it to whom you please.

"Assure Mrs. Law of my latest recollection. Adieu. Adieu. A. Burr."

VIII.

ANECDOTE OF THEODOSIA.

We have one little glimpse of Theodosia in her happy days, in the recently published life of Edward Livingston,* who was Mayor of New York during part of the Vice-presidency of Aaron Burr. The facetious magistrate, we are told, had the pleasure of escorting Theodosia on a visit to a French frigate,

* "Life of Edward Livingston," by Charles Havens Hunt, page 97.

lying in the harbor, perhaps one of the vessels that afterwards fired minute guns on the day of Hamilton's funeral. On the way Mr. Livingston, an inveterate punster, exclaimed: "Now, Theodosia, you must bring none of your sparks on board. They have a magazine, and we should all be blown up!"

The curtain drops on the gay party, and the bright scene. Theodosia's unclouded days were nearly spent. This was one of the last of them.

IX.

RICHMOND HILL AND OLD NEW YORK.

In one of the volumes of the *Talisman*, an annual published in this city, thirty or forty years ago, I find some interesting reminiscences of New York, at the time when Burr and Hamilton were among its leading citizens.

"In New York," remarks the anonymous writer of the paper referred to, "the progress of alteration is so rapid, that a few years effect what in Europe is the work of centuries, and sweep away both the memory and the external vestiges of the generation that precedes us.

"I was forcibly struck with this last reflection when not long since I took a walk with my friend Mr. De Viellecour, during his last visit to New York, over what I recollected as the playground of myself and my companions in the time of my boyhood, and what Mr. De Viellecour remembered as the spot where his contemporaries at an early period used to shoot quails and wood-cocks. We passed over a part of the city which in my time had been hills, hollows, marshes, and rivulets, without having observed anything to awaken in

either of us a recollection of what the place was before the surface had been levelled and the houses erected, until, arriving at the corner of Charlton and Varick streets, we came to an edifice utterly dissimilar to anything around it. It was a wooden building of massive architecture, with a lofty portico supported by Ionic columns, the front walls decorated with pilasters of the same order, and its whole appearance distinguished by that Palladian character of rich though sober ornament, which indicated that it had been built about the middle of the last century. We both stopped involuntarily and at the same moment before it.

"'If I did not see that house on a flat plain,' said Mr. De Viellecour, 'penned in by this little gravelly court yard, and surrounded by these starveling catalpas and horse-chesnuts, I should say at once that it was a mansion which I very well remember, where in my youth I passed many pleasant hours in the society of its hospitable owner, and where, afterwards, when I had the honor of representing my county in the Assembly, which then sat in New York, I had the pleasure of dining officially with Vice President Adams. That house resembled this exactly, but then it was upon a noble hill, several hundred feet in height, commanding a view of the river and of the Jersey shore. There was a fine rich lawn around it, shaded by large and venerable oaks and lindens, and skirted on every side by a young but thrifty natural wood of an hundred acres or more.'

"Perceiving it to be a house of public entertainment, I proposed to Mr. Viellecour that we should enter it. We went into a spacious hall, with a small room on each side opening to more spacious apartments beyond. 'Yes,' said Mr. Viellecour, 'this is certainly the house I spoke of.' He immediately, with the air of a man accustomed to the building, opened a side door on the right, and began to ascend a wide stair-case with a heavy mahogany railing. It conducted us to a large room on the second story, with wide Venetian windows in front, and a door opening to a balcony under the portico. 'Yes,' said my friend, 'here was the dining room. There, in the centre of the table, sat Vice President Adams, in full

dress, with his bag and *solitaire*, his hair frizzed out each side of his face, as you see it in Stuart's older pictures of him. On his right sat Baron Steuben, our royalist republican disciplinarian general. On his left was Mr. Jefferson, who had just returned from France, conspicuous in his red waistcoat and breeches, the fashion of Versailles. Opposite sat Mrs. Adams, with her cheerful intelligent face. She was placed between the courtly Count du Moustiers, the French ambassador, in his red-heeled shoes and ear-rings, and the grave, polite, and formally bowing Mr. Van Birkel, the learned and able envoy of Holland. There, too, was Chancellor Livingston, then still in the prime of life, so deaf as to make conversation with him difficult, yet so overflowing with wit, eloquence and information, that while listening to him the difficulty was forgotten. The rest were members of Congress and of our legislature, some of them no inconsiderable men.

"'Being able to talk French, a rare accomplishment in America at that time, a place was assigned to me next the Count. The dinner was served up after the fashion of that day, abundant, and as was then thought, splendid. Du Moustiers, after taking a little soup, kept an empty plate before him, took now and then a crumb of bread into his mouth, and declined all the luxuries of the table that were pressed upon him, from the roast beef down to the lobsters. We were all in perplexity to know how the Count could dine, when at length his own body cook, in a clean white linen cap, a clean white *tablier* before him, a brilliantly white damask *serviette* flung over his arm, and a warm pie of truffles and game in his hand, came bustling eagerly through the crowd of waiters, and placed it before the Count, who, reserving a moderate share to himself, distributed the rest among his neighbors, of whom being one, I can attest to the truth of the story, and the excellence of the *pate*. But come, let us go, and look at the fine view from the balcony.'

"My friend stepped out the door, and I followed him. The worthy old gentleman seemed much disappointed at finding the view he spoke of confined to the opposite side of Varick street, built up with two-story brick houses, while half a dozen

ragged boys were playing marbles on the side walks. 'Well,' said he, 'the view is gone, that is clear enough; but I cannot, for my part, understand how the house has got so much lower than formerly.'

"I explained to my friend the omnipotence of the Corporation, by which every high hill has been brought low, and every valley exalted, and by which I presumed this house had been abased to a level with its humbler neighbors, the hill on which it stood having been literally dug away from under it, and the house gently let down without even disturbing its furniture, by the mechanical genius and dexterity of some of our eastern brethren.

"'This is wrong,' said the old gentleman; 'these New Yorkers seem to take a pleasure in defacing the monuments of the good old times, and of depriving themselves of all venerable and patriotic associations. This house should have been continued in its old situation, on its own original and proper eminence, where its very aspect would have suggested its history. It was built upwards of seventy years ago, by a gallant British officer, who had done good service to his native country and to this. Here Lord Amherst was entertained, and held his head-quarters, at the close of those successful American campaigns which by the way prevented half the State of New York from being now a part of Canada. Here were afterwards successively the quarters of several of our American generals in the beginning of the revolution, and again after the evacuation of the city. Here John Adams lived as Vice President, during the time that Congress sat in New York; and here Aaron Burr, during the whole of his Vice Presidency, kept up an elegant hospitality, and filled the room in which we stand with a splendid library, equally indicative of his taste and scholarship. The last considerable man that lived here was Counsellor Benzon, afterwards governor of the Danish islands—a man who, like you, Mr. Herbert, had traveled in every part of the world, knew everything, and talked all languages. I recollect dining here in company with thirteen gentlemen, none of whom I ever saw before, but all pleasant fellows, all men of education and of some note—

the Counsellor a Norwegian, I the only American, the rest of every different nation in Europe, and no two of the same, and all of us talking bad French together.

"'There are few old houses,' continued Mr. De Viellecour, 'with the sight of which my youth was familiar, that I find here now. Two or three, however, I still recognize. One of these is the house built by my friend Chief Justice Jay, in the lower part of Broadway, and now occupied as a boarding house. It is, as you know, a large square three-story house, of hewn stone, as substantially built within as without, durable, spacious, and commodious, and, like the principles of the builder, always useful and excellent, whether in or out of fashion.'

"'I believe he did not reside there long,' said I.

"'No, he soon afterwards removed into the house built by the State for the governors, and then to Albany, so that I saw little of him in that house beyond a mere morning visit or two. No remaining object brings him to my mind so strongly as the square pew in Trinity Church, about the centre of the north side of the north aisle. It is now, like everything else in New York, changed. It is divided into several smaller pews, though still retaining externally its original form. That pew was the scene of his regular, sober, unostentatious devotion, and I never look at it without a feeling of veneration. But, Mr. Herbert, can you tell me what is become of the house of my other old friend, Governor George Clinton, at Greenwich?'

"'It is still in existence,' I answered, 'although in very great danger of shortly being let down, like the one in which we now are.'

"'When I was in the Assembly,' pursued Mr. De Viellecour, 'the Governor used to date his messages at 'Greenwich, near New York.' Now, I suppose, the mansion is no longer *near*, but *in* New York.'

"'Not quite,' I replied, 'but doubtless will be, next year. In the mean time the house looks as it did.'

"'I remember it well—a long, low, venerable, irregular, white, cottage-like brick and wood building, pleasant, not-

withstanding, with a number of small low rooms, and one very spacious parlor, delightfully situated on a steep bank, some fifty feet above the shore, on which the waves of the Hudson and the tides of the bay dashed and sported. There was a fine orchard too, and a garden on the north; but I suppose that if not gone, they are going, as they say in Pearl street.'

"'It is even so—were you often there?'

"'Not often, but I had there to divers official dinners, and at one of them I recollect sitting next to old Melancthon Smith, a self-taught orator, the eloquent opposer of the adoption of the federal constitution, and the Patrick Henry of the New York Convention of 1788, who for weeks successfully resisted the powerful and discursive logic of Hamilton, and the splendid rhetoric of Robert R. Livingston. On my other side, and nearer the Governor, sat Brissot de Warville, then on a visit to this country, whose history as a benevolent philosophic speculatist, an ardent though visionary republican, and one of the unfortunate leaders of the Gironde party in the French National Assembly, every body knows.'

"'But you say nothing of the Governor himself?'

"'Oh, surely you must have known him! If you did not, Trumbull's full length of him in the City Hall here, taken forty years ago, and Ceracchi's bust, of about the same date, will give you an excellent idea of his appearance.'

"'Oh yes—his appearance was familiar to me, and I knew him personally too; but when I was in his company, I was too young to have much conversation with him, and afterwards, when he was last Governor, and during his Vice-Presidency, I was, you know, out of the country.'

"'His conversation and manners in private, corresponded exactly with his public character and his looks. His person and face had a general resemblance to those of Washington, but though always dignified, and in old age venerable, he had not that air of heroic elevation which threw such majesty around the father of the republic. There was a similar resemblance in mind. If he had not the calm, grandeur of Washington's intellect, he had the same plain, practical, sound, wholesome common sense—the same unpretending but un-

erring sagacity as to men and measures, the same directness of purpose, and firmness of decision. These qualities were exerted as Governor during our revolution with such effect that the people never forgot it, and they witnessed their gratitude by confiding to him the government of this State for twenty-one years, and the second office in the Union for eight more. His behavior in society was plain but dignified, his conversation easy, shrewd, sensible, and commonly about matters of fact—the events of the revolution, the politics of the day, the useful arts, and agriculture.'

"'Is Hamilton's house still standing?'

"'Not that in which he laboured as Secretary of the Treasury to restore the ruined credit of the nation, and reduce our finances and revenue laws to order and uniformity—where he wrote the Federalist, and those admirable reports which now form the most luminous commentary upon our constitution. That was in Wall street; it has been pulled down, and its site is occupied by the Mechanics' Bank. His last favourite residence was the Grange, his country-seat at Bloomingdale, which when I last saw it remained much as he left it.'

"Mr. Viellecour and myself ordered some refreshment, as a kind of apology for the freedoms we had taken with the old mansion. On leaving it we walked down Greenwich street, moralizing as we went on the changes which time was working so much more visibly in this little corner of the world than in any other part of it which I had seen—where the flight of years seemed swifter than elsewhere, and to bring with it more striking moral lessons. After an absence of thirty years from the great cities of Europe, I beheld when I revisited them, the same aspect, venerable still, yet neither newer nor older than before, the same order of streets, the same public buildings, the same offices, hotels and shops, the same names on the signs, and found my way through their intricacies as if I had left them but yesterday. Here, on the other hand, when I returned after an absence of two years, every thing was strange, new and perplexing, and I lost my way in streets which had been laid out since I left the city.

"My companion often stopped to look at houses and sites of which he had some remembrance. 'There,' said he, pointing to a modest looking two story dwelling in one of the cross-streets—'there died my good friend Mons. Albert, a minister of our French Protestant Church about twenty years ago, a very learned and eloquent divine, and the most modest man I ever knew. He was a native of Lausanne, a nephew of Deyverdun, the friend of Gibbon, who figures in the correspondence and memoirs of the historian. Mons. Albert was much in the society of Gibbon, and has related to me many anecdotes of his literary habits and conversation.'

"'I must not suffer you to monopolize all the recollections of the city,' said I to my friend. 'Observe, if you please, that house on the corner opposite the one to which you have directed my attention. There lived for a time my old acquaintance Collies, a mathematician, a geographer, and a mechanician of no mean note. He was a kind of living antithesis, and I have often thought that nature made him expressly to illustrate that figure of rhetoric. He was a man of the most diminutive frame and the most gigantic conceptions, the humblest demeanour and the boldest projects I ever knew. Forty years ago, his mind was teeming with plans of western canals, steam-boats, rail-roads, and other public enterprises, which in more fortunate and judicious hands have since proved fruitful of wealth to the community, and of merited honour to those who carried them through. Poor Collies had neither capital to undertake them himself, plausibility to recommend them to others, nor public character and station to give weight and authority to his opinions. So he schemed and toiled and calculated all his life, and died at eighty, without having gained either wealth for himself, or gratitude from the public. The marine telegraphs in this port are a monument of his ingenuity, for he was the first man of the country who established a regular and intelligible system of ship signals.'

"My friend stopped at some of the shops to make inquiries concerning the ancient inmates. At length I heard him asking for Adonis. 'Pray,' said I, 'who is this modern Adonis

for whom you are inquiring? some "smooth rose-cheeked boy" doubtless, like him of Mount Libanus.' 'This Adonis,' replied Mr. Viellecour, 'is neither a "smooth nor rose-cheeked boy,' being in fact a black old man, or rather gentleman, for a gentleman he is every inch of him, although a barber. I say *is*, for I hope he is still alive and well, although I have not seen him for some years. In this sneaking, fashion-conforming, selfish world, I hold in high honour any man who for the sake of any principle, important or trifling, right or wrong, so it be without personal interest, will for years submit to inconvenience or ridicule. Adonis submitted to both, and for principle's sake.'

"'Principle's sake!—upon what head?'

"'Upon his own, sir, or upon Louis the Sixteenth's, just as you please. Adonis was an old French negro, whom the convulsions attendant in the West Indies upon the French revolution, threw upon our shores, and who held in the utmost horror all jacobinical and republican abominations. He had an instinctive sagacity as to what was genteel and becoming in manners and behaviour, as well as in the cut of a gentleman's hair, or the curl of a lady's. He had attended to the progress of the French revolution with the greatest interest, and his feelings were excited to the highest pitch when he heard of the beheading of the French king, and the banishment of the royal family. He then deliberately renounced the French nation and their *canaille*, *parvenu* rulers, and in testimony of the sincerity of his indignation and grief, took off his hat and vowed never to put it on again until the Bourbons should be restored to the throne. This vow he faithfully kept. For twenty years, through all weathers, did he walk the streets of New York, bare-headed, carrying his hat under his arm, with the air of a courtier, filled with combs, scissors, and other implements of his trade, until his hair, which was of the deepest black when he first took it off, had become as white as snow. For my part, I confess, I never saw him on my occasional visits to the city, walking to the houses of his customers without his hat, but I felt inclined to take off my own to him. Like all the rest of the world, I

took it for granted that the loyal old negro would never wear his hat again. At length in the year 1814, the French armed schooner ——, with the white flag flying, arrived in the port of New York, bringing the first intelligence of the return of the Bourbons to their throne and kingdom. Adonis would not believe the report that flew like wild-fire about the city; he would not trust the translations from the French gazettes that were read to him in the American papers by his customers, but walked down to the battery, with the same old hat under his arm which he had carried there for twenty years, saw the white flag with his own eyes, heard the news in French from the mouth of the cook on board the vessel, and then waving his hat three times in the air, gave three huzzas, and replaced it on his head, with as much heart-felt pride as Louis the 18th could have done his crown.'

"I could not help smiling at the earnest gravity of the old gentleman's eulogy upon Adonis. 'I fear,' said I, 'that your chivalric *coiffeur* owes a little of his sentimental loyalty to your own admiration of every thing generous and disinterested. When you are excited on this head, sir, you often remind me of what old Fuseli, in his energetic style, used to say of his great idol Michael Angelo—"All that he touched was indiscriminately stamped with his own grandeur. A beggar rose from his hands the Patriarch of poverty; the very hump of his dwarf is impressed with dignity." I suspect you have been unconsciously playing the Michael Angelo in lighting up such a halo of consecrated glory round the bare and time-honoured head of old Adonis. I am afraid I cannot do quite as much for another tonsorial artist of great celebrity who flourished here in our days, but whom, as at that time you were not much in the habit of coming to town, perhaps you do not remember. He made no claim to chivalry or romance, his sole ambition was to be witty and poetical; and witty he certainly was, as well as the vehicle and conduit of innumerable good pleasantries of other people. I mean John Desborus Huggins.'

"'Huggins—Huggins,' said Mr. De Vielleeour. 'I knew

a young lady of that name once, she who is now Mrs. ——, the fashionable milliner.'

"'Oh, yes—that incident of your life cannot easily lose its place in my memory. But John Desborus Huggins was no relation of hers. He was of pure English blood, and had no kindred on this side of the Atlantic. At the beginning of this century, and for a dozen years after, he was the most fashionable, as well as the most accomplished artist in this city for heads, male and female. He had a shop in Broadway, a low wooden building, where now towers a tall brick pile opposite the City Hotel. This was literally the head-quarters of fashion, and fortune, as usual, followed in the train of fashion. But Huggins had a soul that scorned to confine its genius to the external decoration of his customers' heads. He panted after wider fame; he had cut Washington Irving's hair, he had shaved Anacreon Moore, when he was here, and Joel Barlow, on his first return from France; from them he caught the strong contagion of authorship. One day he wrote a long advertisement, in which he ranged from his own shop in Broadway to high and bold satire upon those who held the helm of state at Washington, mimicked Jefferson's style, and cracked some good-humoured jokes upon Giles and Randolph. He carried it to the Evening Post. The editor, the late Mr. Coleman, you know, was a man of taste as well as a keen politician. He pruned off Huggins' exuberances, corrected his English, threw in a few pungent sarcasms of his own, and printed it.

"'It had forthwith a run through all the papers on the federal side of the question in the United States, and as many of the others as could relish a good joke, though at the expense of their own party. The name of Huggins became known from Georgia to Maine. Huggins tried a second advertisement of the same sort, a third, a fourth, with equal success. His fame as a wit was now established; business flowed in upon him, in full and unebbing tide. Wits and would-be wits, fashionables and would-be fashionables, thronged his shop; strangers from north and south had their heads cropped, and their chins scraped by him, for the sake of

saying on their return home that they had seen Huggins; whilst during the party-giving season, he was under orders from the ladies every day and hour for three weeks ahead. But alas, unhappy man! he had now a literary reputation to support, and his invention, lively and sparkling as it had been at first, soon began to run dry. He was now obliged to tax his friends and patrons for literary assistance. Mr. Coleman was too deeply engaged in the daily discussions of grave topics to continue his help. In the kindness of my excellent friend, the late Anthony Bleecker, he found for a long time a never-failing resource. You were not much acquainted with Bleecker, I think—the most honourable, the most amiable, and the most modest of human beings. Fraught with talent, taste, and literature, a wit and a poet, he rarely appeared in public as an author himself, whilst his careless generosity furnished the best part of their capital to dozens of literary adventurers, sometimes giving them style for their thoughts, and sometimes thoughts for their style. Bleecker was too kindly tempered for a partisan politician, and his contributions to Huggins were either good-natured pleasantries upon the fashions or frivolities of the day, or else classical imitations and spirited parodies in flowing and polished versification. Numerous other wits and witlings, when Bleecker grew tired of it, some of whom had neither his taste nor his nice sense of gentlemanly decorum, began to contribute, until at length Huggins found himself metamorphosed into the regular Pasquin of New York, on whom, as on a mutilated old statue of that name at Rome, every wag stuck his anonymous epigram, joke, satire or lampoon, on whatever was unseemly in his eyes or unsavoury in his nostrils in this good city. I believe he was useful, however. If his humanities had not been too much neglected in his youth to allow him to quote Latin, he might have asked with Horace—*Ridentem dicere verum*—.'

"'My dear sir,' interrupted the old gentleman, 'if you will quote, and I see you are getting into one of your quoting modes, you had better quote old Kats, my maternal grandmother's favourite book, the great poet of Holland and com-

mon-sense. He has said it better than Horace: 'Haar lage-hend coysheid laert, haar spelend vormt ter deuyd.' You ought always to quote old Kats, whenever you can, for I suspect that you and I, and Judge Benson, are the only natives south of the Highlands who can read him. But to return to your barber-author.'

"'Huggins became as fond and as proud of these contributions as if he had written them all himself, and at last collected them together in one goodly volume, entitled, Hugginiana, illustrated with designs by Jarvis, and wood-cuts by Anderson. He was now an author in all the forms. Luckless author! His 'vaulting ambition overleaped itself.' He sent a copy of his book to the Edinburgh Review, then in the zenith of its glory, and the receipt was never acknowledged. He sent another copy to Dennie, whose Port Folio then guided the literary taste of this land, and Dennie noticed it only in a brief and cold paragraph. What was excellent in a newspaper jeu d'esprit, whilst events and allusions were fresh, lost of course much of its relish when served up cold, years after, in a clumsy duodecimo. Besides, not having been able to prevail on himself to part with any thing which had once appeared under his name, much very inferior matter was suffered to overlay those sprightly articles which had first given him eclat. Then the town critics assailed him, and that 'most delicate monster,' the public, who had laughed at every piece, good, bad, and indifferent, singly in succession, now that the whole was collected, became fastidious, and at the instigation of the critics aforesaid, pronounced the book to be 'low.' Frightful sentence! Huggins never held up his head after it. His razors and scissors lost their edge, his napkins and aprons their lustrous whiteness, and his conversation its soft spirit and vivacity. His affairs all went wrong thence forward, and whatever might have been the immediate cause of his death, which took place a year or two after, the real and efficient reason was undoubtedly mortified literary pride. 'Around his tomb,' as old Johnson says of Archbishop Laud—

> "Around his tomb, let arts and genius weep,
> But hear his death, ye block-heads, hear and sleep."

"We had now got far down into the old part of the city, when, turning up Vesey street from Greenwich, Mr. De Vielleeour made a sudden pause. 'Ah,' said he, 'one more vestige of the past. There,' pointing to a common looking old house, 'there, in 1790, was the *atelier* of Ceracchi, when he was executing his fine busts of our great American statesmen.'

"'Indeed!' answered I—'I have often thought of it as a singular piece of natural good fortune, that at a time when our native arts were at so low an ebb, we had such an artist thrown upon our shores to perpetuate the true and living likenesses of our revolutionary chiefs and sages. Ceracchi's busts of Washington, Jay, Alexander Hamilton, George Clinton, and others, are now as mere portraits above all price to this nation; and they have besides a classic grace about them, which entitle the artist to no contemptible rank as a statuary.'

"'It was not a piece of mere good fortune,' said my friend. 'We have to thank the artist himself for it. Ceracchi was a zealous republican, and he came here full of enthusiasm, anxious to identify his own name in the arts somehow or other with our infant republic—and he has done it. He had a grand design of a national monument, which he used to show to his visitors, and which he wished Congress to employ him to execute in marble or bronze. Of course they did not do so, and, as it happened, he was much more usefully employed for the nation in modelling the busts of our great men.'

"'He was an Italian, I believe a Roman, and had lived some time in England, where he was patronized by Reynolds. Sir Joshua (no mean poof of his talent) sat to him for a bust, and a fine one I am told it is. Ceracchi came to America enthusiastic for liberty, and he found nothing here to make him change his principles or feelings. But the nation was not ripe for statuary—a dozen busts exhausted the patronage of the country, and Congress was too busy with pounds, shillings, and pence, fixing the revenue laws, and funding the debt, to think of his grand allegorical monument. Ceracchi could not live upon liberty alone, much as he loved it, and

when the French revolution took a very decided character, he went to France, and plunged into politics. Some years after he returned to Rome, where he was unfortunately killed in an insurrection or popular tumult, growing out of the universal revolutionary spirit of those times.'

"'May his remains rest in peace,' added I. 'Whatever higher works of art he may have left elsewhere—and he who could produce those fine classic, historical busts, was undoubtedly capable of greater things—whatever else he may have left in Europe, here his will be an enduring name. As long as Americans shall hold in honoured remembrance the memory of their first and best patriots—as long as our sons shall look with reverend interest on their sculptured images, the name of Ceracchi will be cherished here:

> "And while along the stream of time, their name
> Expanded flies and gathers all its fame;
> Still shall his little barque attendant sail,
> Pursue the triumph and partake the gale.'

"We had now finished our long walk, and as the old gentleman was going into his lodgings, I took leave of him."

X.

THE ELECTION OF 1800.

Four notes, written by Burr at New York to his relation, Pierpont Edwards of New Haven, in the very crisis of the presidential election of 1800, have come to light. To some readers they will be interesting.

"Thursday, 20th (Nov.) Ev'g.—If you have survived the letter which I wrote you this morning, you will have lived to hear better tidings. This afternoon, arrived in six days from Georgia, Mr. Jones, member of congress from that state and a very intelligent man. He considers the vote of S. C. as undoubtedly republican—saw General Pinkney in Savannah about ten days ago—says that the General appeared to entertain no other hope than that of compromising so as to run his own name with Jefferson—that in Georgia there are but five federal men in the two houses of legislature.—He (Jones) disbelieves the account which I transmitted you yesterday respecting N. C., and says that we cannot have less then seven votes.

"21st Nov.—We have now the assurance of six votes in Maryland and a confirmation of the favorable temper of the Legislature of S. C.—After all there is no certainty without R. I.

"The Legislature of Maryland have postponed until their next session the appointment of a Senator to Congress in the place of Lloyd.—As an entire election of their State Senate will intervene, there is little room to doubt of a republican in Lloyd's stead. Yours A. B.

"Will your electors be unanimous for Pinkney?

"I have little hope of any good from Penn'a,—they talk and write a great deal but do little."

"New York, Nov. 26, 1800.—You despond without reason. If we have R. I., Jefferson will have a majority even without Penn'a or S. C.—but in S. C. there is every reason to believe that *he* will have the whole eight.

"You do not answer my enquiries as to the votes which A. will have in N. England. Yours A. B."

"Nov. 29, 1800.—S. C. will probably give an unanimous vote for Pinckney and Jefferson,—Maryland 5 and 5,—N. C. 8 and 4,—Penn'a probably no vote. If your people (New England) leave out P. from 2 or 3 votes, J. will be Pres't,—otherwise doubtful.

"What became of Williams' suit? A. B."

"New York, Dec. 1, 1800.—I receive this morning your letter of the 26–27th. It is highly probable that P. will have the votes of S. C.—but A. will in no event have a vote there. In Maryland we have five only and in N. C. eight.—Penn'a nothing.—Advise me of the votes of your electors as soon as given and known.

"Wm. Burbridge arrived yesterday in good order. I like his physiognomy.

"I expect to be at home on the 12th and thenceforth till Jan. Yours A. B."

XI.

THE ELECTION OF JEFFERSON AND BURR.

A curious relic of party strife is a Fourth of July oration, delivered at New Haven in 1801, a few months after the accession of Jefferson and Burr, by Theodore Dwight, brother of the celebrated president of Yale College. The following are extracts:—

"It is probable that the persons who compose this audience, have never met to celebrate the anniversary of American Independence, with sensations, similar to those which they experience this day. Since the last year, the Administration of our national government has gone into the hands of men, whom the generality of the people of New England have long viewed as its enemies—men whose principles and practices we have both feared and reprobated. A change of this sort in a country like this, could not have been wrought without a violent struggle. One side grasping at power and emoluments; the other eagerly endeavouring to save their constitu-

tion and country, exhibit to our view a state of things which presupposes passion, strife, and tumult, success having crowned the exertions of the party which with no small share of par ade assumes the title of Republican; but which in more correct phraseology, is called *Jacobinical.*

"That government, which the collected wisdom, virtue, and patriotism of the United States, originally planned, and which we flattered ourselves, was established in its operations, under the auspices, the skill, the pre-eminent virtue, and singular talents of THE FATHER OF HIS COUNTRY, is now the sport of popular commotion—is adrift without helm or compass, in a turbid and boisterous ocean.

"The great object of Jacobinism, both in its political and moral revolution, is to destroy every trace of civilization in the world, and to force mankind back into a savage state That is, in plain English, the greatest villain in the community is the fittest person to make and execute the laws. Graduated by this scale, there can be no doubt that Jacobins have the highest qualifications for rulers.

"We have now reached the consummation of democratic blessedness. We have a country governed by blockheads and knaves; the ties of marriage with all its felicities are severed and destroyed; our wives and daughters are thrown into the stews; our children are cast into the world from the breast forgotten; filial piety is extinguished and our surnames, the only mark of distinction among families, are abolished. Can the imagination paint any thing more dreadful this side hell? Some parts of the subject are indeed fit only for horrid contemplation."

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